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P O E M S

T O

HER MAJESTY.

&c. &c.

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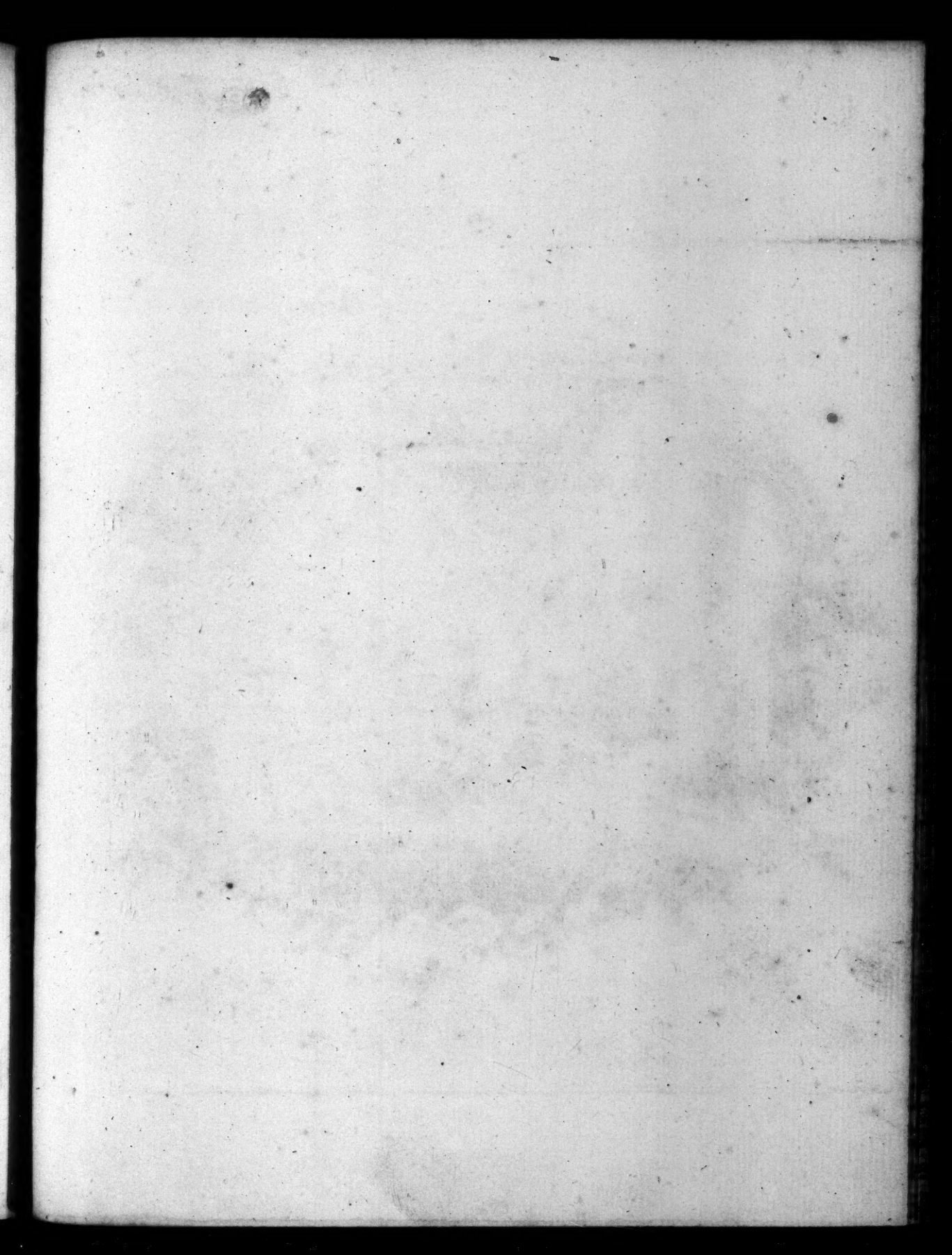
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P. O. E. M. S.

HER MAJESTY.

Geo. Geo.

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# POEMS

TO HER

MAJESTY.



*And— all enamour'd with the scene—  
 Like these dear royal Emblems gay,  
 Intwine fresh Laurels for her Queen.*



P O E M S

T O

HER MAJESTY:

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A NEW TRAGEDY,

ENTITLED, THE

EARL OF SOMERSET;

LITERALLY FOUNDED ON HISTORY:

WITH A

PREFATORY ADDRESS, &c.

---

By HENRY LUCAS, A.M.

STUDENT OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE,

AUTHOR OF THE TEARS OF ALNWICK, VISIT FROM THE SHADES, &c.

---

*Tentanda via est, quâ me quoque possim  
Tollere humo.*

VIRGIL.

'Tis Nature's precept, to attempt to rise,  
On virtuous pinions, soaring to the skies.

---

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

By WILLIAM DAVIS, N<sup>o</sup>. 25, LUDGATE-HILL.

Sold also by J. DODSLEY, Pall-Mall; J. RIDLEY, St. James's-Street; J. MURRAY, Fleet-Street; and by the AUTHOR, N<sup>o</sup>. 1, Spur-Street, Leicester-Fields; near Panton-Street.

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M,DCC,LXXIX.

P-O-E-M-S

HERBERT

W. M. GOSWORTHY

POSTAL ADDRESS

THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
NATURAL  
HISTORY  
AND  
ANTHROPOLOGY  
BRITISH MUSEUM  
LONDON



THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
NATURAL  
HISTORY  
AND  
ANTHROPOLOGY  
BRITISH MUSEUM  
LONDON

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TO THE  
QUEEN'S

MOST EXCELLENT

MAJESTY.

MADAM,

A Benignant Spirit near YOUR ROYAL Person, having been pleased to accept the former of these Poems in Manuscript, was so kind—at the Author's solicitation and *Excuse*—to gain it access to YOUR MAJESTY's presence. By this happy incident it arrived to the distinguished honor of your gracious perusal.

The



The dear intelligence, "That YOUR MAJESTY was pleased to express your approbation of it," naturally gave rise to the second. The indulgence of hope, that it was alike graciously received, conveys such a sense of YOUR ROYAL goodness, such exalted honor, as far transcend the flights of Fancy, or the utterance of the sincerest gratitude and respect.

On these most flattering, most delightful persuasions; and by desire of many Noble Patrons; I again present them, enlarged and less imperfect, to YOUR MAJESTY: humbly expectant, that should the same Poems—wherein, 'tis hoped, the much-loved Theme will more than compensate the defects of the writing—should they be honored with public favour, they will not be less acceptable to YOUR MAJESTY in print.

How justly is this expectance revived, oft as I consider; that, to the numerous and rich  
endow-

# DEDICATION

iii

endowments of YOUR ROYAL mind, YOUR love of the Muses gives additional lustre!

The gracious regard shewn to the efforts of poetic Genius by our most powerful Queens, renowned ELIZABETH, victorious ANNE, admired CAROLINE, and others, makes the memorial of their greatness dearer, and more respected, to this day.

Fain would my grateful, eager Thought give due extent to the idea! but—

Where PRAISE must halt, unequal to the course,  
Silence is most consummate Eloquence!

Nor should I have presumed to annex the Tragedy of SOMERSET, but on the judgment and approbation of some of our most acknowledged Critics, in whose cabinet it has been indulgently received.

Yet how is this extraordinary happiness chequered with alloy, at being obliged to prefix  
YOUR



YOUR ROYAL name to this work—though this privilege has ever been claimed by English Bards—without having solicited YOUR MAJESTY'S permission! But my humble efforts to approach YOUR MAJESTY proved unsuccessful; and my only consolation is the hope, that my Muse will continue to deserve a better fate.

Grant this, my kind Genius! to perfect the humble, yet earnest wish of him, who is—with gratitude, loyalty, and respect, surpassing his expression—

YOUR MAJESTY'S

Most dutiful, devoted,

and

Most humble Servant,

**HENRY LUCAS.**

*London,*

*June 6. 1779.*



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THE  
EJACULATION:

OCCASIONED BY SEEING THE  
ROYAL CHILDREN,

ON

HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTH-DAY.

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THE  
ELUCULATION;

OCCASIONED BY BEING THE

ROYAL CHILDREN,

ON

HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTH-DAY.

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T H E

# EJACULATION.

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*Chara DEÛM soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum!*

VIRGIL.

Dear offspring of the Gods, great Jove's increase!

—For BRITAIN's glory born, and BRITAIN's peace!

---

WHEN NATURE's beauties strike th' admiring view,  
Who can suppress th' emotions that ensue?  
Who, that beholds th' enamell'd Garden's pride,  
Can, at the scene, his sweet sensations hide;  
Restrain his wonder, his fond joy controul,  
If touch of feeling plays upon his soul?

## THE EJACULATION.

In NATURE's Garden, say, what flow'r so fair  
 As MAN, th' immediate object of her care?  
 For whom the sacred Voice bade order rise,  
 And model'd CHAOS emulate the skies;  
 For whom, and whom alone, each flow'ret blows,  
 And ev'ry seed of LIFE, obedient, grows!

But, as from NATURE's vegetable source,  
 'Tis TIME and CARE invigorate their course;  
 Depress the granule, slight the tender seeds,  
 In them, the future generation bleeds.

Or as the Slave, who, with un pitying eye,  
 Treads down the worm, destroys the butterfly;  
 Her gaudy plumage never darts its ray,  
 If unprotected in her early day.

Or as the ARTIST, born with all the pow'rs,  
 Benignant NATURE on her fav'rite show'rs;

Crush



## THE EJACULATION.

5

Crush his young efforts, his first hopes despise,  
His spirits sunk, in vain he pants to rise,  
In vain he labours for the future prize!  
Great REYNOLDS' self were lost, had his first shade  
Ne'er caught the eye, nor challeng'd human aid.

So with MANKIND ; from CHILDHOOD we must trace  
The future PARENT, and the future RACE ;  
From them each joy, each smiling comfort flows,  
—Solace of ev'ry pang a MOTHER knows !  
They're the grand fountain, whence we can derive  
Substantial hope, that NATURE will survive.

Such crude ideas—O advent'rous lay !—  
Spontaneous rose, on this most sacred day ;  
The PARENT'S natal day, the CHILDREN'S too  
To me, first honor'd with the charming view ;  
When first the REGAL OFFSPRING blest'd my sight,  
With transport, far above the MUSE'S flight ;

Language,

Language, by JOHNSON tho' sublimely drest,  
 Speaks not the rapture, that my soul posselt,  
 The rich idea lives but in my breast!

Such emanations of the ray divine,  
 Such sweet perfection breathes in ev'ry line;  
 Such artless MAJESTY, with EASE combin'd,  
 Flows from the native virtues of their mind;  
 As FANCY pictures not to fondest HOPE,  
 Nor comes within EXPRESSION's bounded scope.

Poets have sung of PRIAM's vaunted race,  
 Their unmatch'd Beauty, and superior Grace:  
 Long were their numbers deem'd poetic flight,  
 'Till here the truth's conspicuously bright!  
 Had HOMER, or their LAUREATS, seen ourdays,  
 They had been silent, or recall'd their praise,  
 And to great CHARLOTTE's Issue tun'd their lays.

When such dear Objects then impress the sight,  
 Who can command their wonder, and delight?

Who

## THE EJACULATION.

7

Who can be silent, in whose circling veins

A spark of animated NATURE reigns?

But let one loyal Atom sport within,

Awak'ning Sense to the exalted scene—

A scene, like this, of such important weight,

Not less involving than BRITANNIA's fate,

How check the operation of their Charms,

Rebuking SILENCE, and her vain alarms!

While thus, in artless strains, the voice of TRUTH,

—Befitting such bright INNOCENCE and YOUTH—

Th' enamour'd Soul presents her fervent pray'r—

“ Make them, kind HEAVEN! your most peculiar care!

“ Grant to a PEOPLE's wish, O THOU MOST HIGH!

“ They never know AFFLICTION's lightest sigh!

“ But as, in bounteous grace, they far exceed

“ The progeny of KINGS; be it decreed,

“ Superior blessings crown their princely head!

THE

“ Let



## THE EJACULATION.

" Let GRIEF obtrude not ! and, when LIFE must cease,

" Receive them, VIRTUE, to celestial peace !

So MYRIADS pray—nor less the pious strain,  
For the dear PARENTS, than the ROYAL TRAIN !  
The chaste invokement, see, how HEAVEN approves,  
Your bliss and empire boundless, as our loves !

So prays MANKIND—but none with zeal more true,  
Than are these vows prefer'd for Them—and You !



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## THE EXCUSE.

*To the Right Hon. ———, with The  
EJACULATION, a Poem.*

WHERE GOODNESS smiles with Power, they still  
extend

Their genial aid, the POET to befriend!

If then th'inclos'd shall, happily, convey

One elevated thought, one lumin'd ray;

Th'EJACULATION, pleas'd, you will receive,

And to great ALBION'S QUEEN, at leisure give!

So may the royal love exalt your fame,

And ev'ry MUSE record kind ———'s name!

THE EXCUSE.

To the Right Hon. ———, *with The*  
ELUCIDATION, a Poem.

WHERE Goodness smiles with Power, they still

extend

Their genial aid, the Poet to defend.

If then th' inches'd shall, happily, convey

One elevated thought, one human day,

The ELUCIDATION, pleas'd, you will receive.

And to great ARION'S QUEEN, at leisure give!

So may the royal love exalt your name,

And ev'ry Muse record kind ———'s name!



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THE  
O B L A T I O N,

A  
L Y R I C P O E M,

O N

Her MAJESTY's happy Delivery of a Daughter,

THE NOW AMIABLE

Princess *S O P H I A*,

NOVEMBER 3, 1777.

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THE  
OBITUARY  
A  
LYRIC POEM  
ON  
Her Majesty's happy Delivery of a Daughter,  
THE NOW AMIABLE  
Princess SOPHIA,  
NOVEMBER 3. 1777.

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THE  
**O B L A T I O N.**

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*Cast* **LUCINA, save!** — **HOR.**

O chaste **LUCINA!** hear a **NATION's** pray'r,  
And the dear Parent, to our wishes, spare!

---

**EMPRESS** of **BRITAIN's** love! whose gentle sway,  
With willing admiration, all obey!  
Whose ease and dignity, unknown to Art,  
Pure, unaffected Majesty impart!  
The **MUSE's** Patron, boast of ev'ry page,  
While **TRUTH** and **VIRTUE** shall the soul engage!

**How**

\* The subject of the preceding Poem.



How shall the humblest Subject of your train,  
 The theme of LOYALTY, once more, sustain !  
 Ere while, the \*REGAL OFFSPRING swell'd his lays,  
 Which gracious MAJESTY vouchsaf'd to praise :  
 But when he views that Portrait rudely drawn !  
 —Whence only pure-ey'd, chaste affections dawn ;  
 No shadow touch'd of that illumin'd grace,  
 In glowing colours, pictur'd in each face !——  
 How must the present Subject fade away,  
 Unting'd, nor tinctur'd with one solar ray !  
 How, when the PARENT claims th'exerted pow'rs  
 Of rich IMAGINATION's choicest stores ;  
 What energy of utterance can impart  
 The joy, Her safety gives each loyal heart !

What tho' the BABE, our Hope's yet infant heir,  
 Scarce more than breathes, to animate our care !  
 Yet, as we oft, prejudging by the past,  
 The coming Harvest, mentally, foretaste !

And

\* The subject of the preceding Poem.

## THE OBLATION.

15

And as we gather, from a former sky,  
What sweet serenity of SEASON's nigh ;  
So, as the mirror of Her future day,  
Her BRETHREN's grace, Her SISTERS' charms survey ;  
And, from the preface of Their blooming youth,  
Fore-read conviction of this solid truth !

“ That when, some circles past, this day returns,  
“ And all the PARENT in Her bosom burns ;  
“ When emulation of Her royal line  
“ Shall swell Her soul with sentiments divine ;  
“ Then, justly, shall exulting BRITAIN own  
“ The strength, Her-added virtues give the Throne !”

While, to these truths, the PARENT's safety join'd,  
Awakes each glad sensation of the mind !  
And while th'enraptur'd cause expands each breast,  
Can my delight, my ardor be suppress'd !  
No—tho' untutor'd my fond zeal to prove,  
Indulge th'effusion of all-grateful love !

## THE OBLATION.

And, hark ! the Cannon's loud acclaim,  
 Undulating thro' the air,  
 Pierces each delighted ear,  
 With the addition of BRITANNIA's fame !

And, to diffuse the general weal,  
 The deep-tongued Bells' enliv'ning peal,  
 With ravishment profound,  
 And animation's sound,  
 Conveys abroad the heart-inspiring theme !  
 That, lo ! another blessing's given,  
 —Such favor from indulgent Heaven !—

To check PRESUMPTION's lightest aim,  
 By the increase of GEORGE's royal name !



## THE OBLATION.

17

### CHORUS.

Let Hallelujahs rend the sky!

SUCCESSION's arm,

With twelve-fold charm,

Commands each anxious thought to fly!

Suppresses fear

Of future care;

While CHARLOTTE's favor'd race all arts defy!

### II.

\*'Tis chronicled in ROMAN days,

—As AQUITAINE relates—

MAN's registers, the FATES,

Pronounc'd

\* This idea took its rise from the following passage in SPEED's Chronicle; where, treating of the various names attributed to this island of GREAT BRITAIN, he writes—“And PROSPERUS AQUITANIS in expresse words calleth it “The Romane Island”; and so did the Soothsayers; who, when the statues of TACITUS and FLORIANUS, the Emperours, were by lightning overthrowen, prophesied—“That an Emperour should arise, out of their familie, that should send a Pro-Consul to the Romane Island.”

## THE OBLATION.

Pronounc'd—to TACITUS' and FLORIAN's praise—

That, from their favor'd strain,

The gracious Gods ordain,

Succeeding Time an Emperor should raise ;

From whom should spring

A warlike King ;

To rule this Infant Land with potent sway,

Whom ALBION's Chiefs, admiring, would obey !

## III.

If ancient SAGES shall presume,

From Lightning's blasts, to date

Fore-knowledge of MAN's fate ;

And speak, in prescience, of events to come !

May I not turn my thoughts to prophecy,

Which clearer seems,

Than SOOTHSAYERS' dreams,

And

## THE OBLATION.

19

And \*CONQUEST lately brightens to the eye !  
That from this happy night,  
When a new PRINCESS charm'd the fight,  
The registry of HEAVEN, reveal'd from high,  
Shall sweetly smile  
On BRITAIN'S Isle,  
And give her to subdue the WESTERN world,  
Forth from its CHAOS and CONFUSION. hurl'd !

### CHORUS.

Let Hallelujahs rend the sky,

&c. &c. &c.

IV.

\* This remark is founded on fact; as, a few days antecedent to Her MAJESTY's happy delivery, the private accounts came of the surrender of Philadelphia. A Writer of this age, when all subjects are so universally exhausted, must embrace every new occurrence, that will tend to promote or embellish his work; unless he would be one of HORACE's herd——

*“ O imitatores, servum pecus !*

Ye imitators, mean and servile group,  
How to unworthy copyists ye stoop !



## THE OBLATION.

## IV.

May \*chaste LUCINA's gifts such joys foreshow !

And ev'ry coming hour improve

The sence of LOYALTY and LOVE,

Which the AMERIC Chiefs to BRITAIN owe !

No more REBELLION's impious hand

Be rais'd against their vital Land ;

But meek SUBMISSION and COMPLACENCE flow !

No more the sword of jealous STRIFE

Attack a kindred People's life !

But, if fell MARS's rage

No PITY can assuage ;

Bent be the spear against the common foe !

United thus, what danger, what controul,

Can taint the gen'ral blifs, or shake the soul !

\* *Cast* LUCINA !

While,

THE OBLATION.

21

V.

While, with our gracious QUEEN, such hopes we share,

Let us, surpassing ROMAN style,

With universal smile,

AMERICANA name the much-lov'd Fair!

And forthwith may the omen find

Such confidence in ev'ry mind,

That no light incidents provoke DESPAIR!

But, with a settled patience, wait

Th'approaching hour of happy FATE,

Which all our souls' contentment shall employ;

When FACTION's voice, and rebel schemes,

Defeated of their lawless aims,

REMORSE, and chaste REPENTANCE, shall destroy!

And turning to their rightful Prince and Lord,

Spare the dire havock of th'avenging sword,

So full be PEACE and CONFIDENCE restor'd!

CHO-

## THE OBLATION.

## C H O R U S.

Let Hallelujahs rend the sky!

SUCCESSION's arm,

With twelve-fold charm,

Commands each anxious thought to fly!

Suppresses fear

Of future CARE ;

While CHARLOTTE's favor'd race all arts defy!

## VI.

\*Hold, rapid MUSE!—though partial to the Fair,

Your first-born theme!

Is there no claim

For young OCTAVIUS' praise, our latest care!

Hail, happy thought! since joys increase,

With the much-lov'd, and princely race,

Entwine

\* This, and the following stanza, were added since the birth of Prince OCTAVIUS.



## THE OBLATION.

23

Entwine a double wreath, the laurel spread !

Let SOPHIA and OCTAVIUS, join'd,

Equal in favour with MANKIND,

Divide the bays, and blessings, on their head !

Nor ever, but in VIRTUE, vie,

Their FAME immortal, as the Sky,

While these, the great prognostics of their birth,

By TIME matur'd, enrich their native earth !

### VII.

\* And who the bright idea misconceives,

Who views each hour

Extend the pow'r,

Which laurell'd VICTORY to BRITAIN gives !

While CONSCIENCE's terrific brood,

Heart-wounding BLAME,

And inward SHAME,

Awake the awful sense of GRATITUDE !

That

\* This is derived from the many late successful accounts from  
General Sir HENRY CLINTON, K.B.

## THE OBLATION.

That—as th'award of pow'r supreme,  
 Rebuk'd at CLINTON's bold advance,  
 And terrors of th'uplifted lance,  
 Rais'd to avenge BRITANNIA's injur'd name;  
 GUILT drops the rebel arm, appall'd in fight,  
 Acknowledging her just, superior right !

Propitious HEAVEN ! be these th'events design'd !

“ Establish BRITAIN's empire o'er mankind !

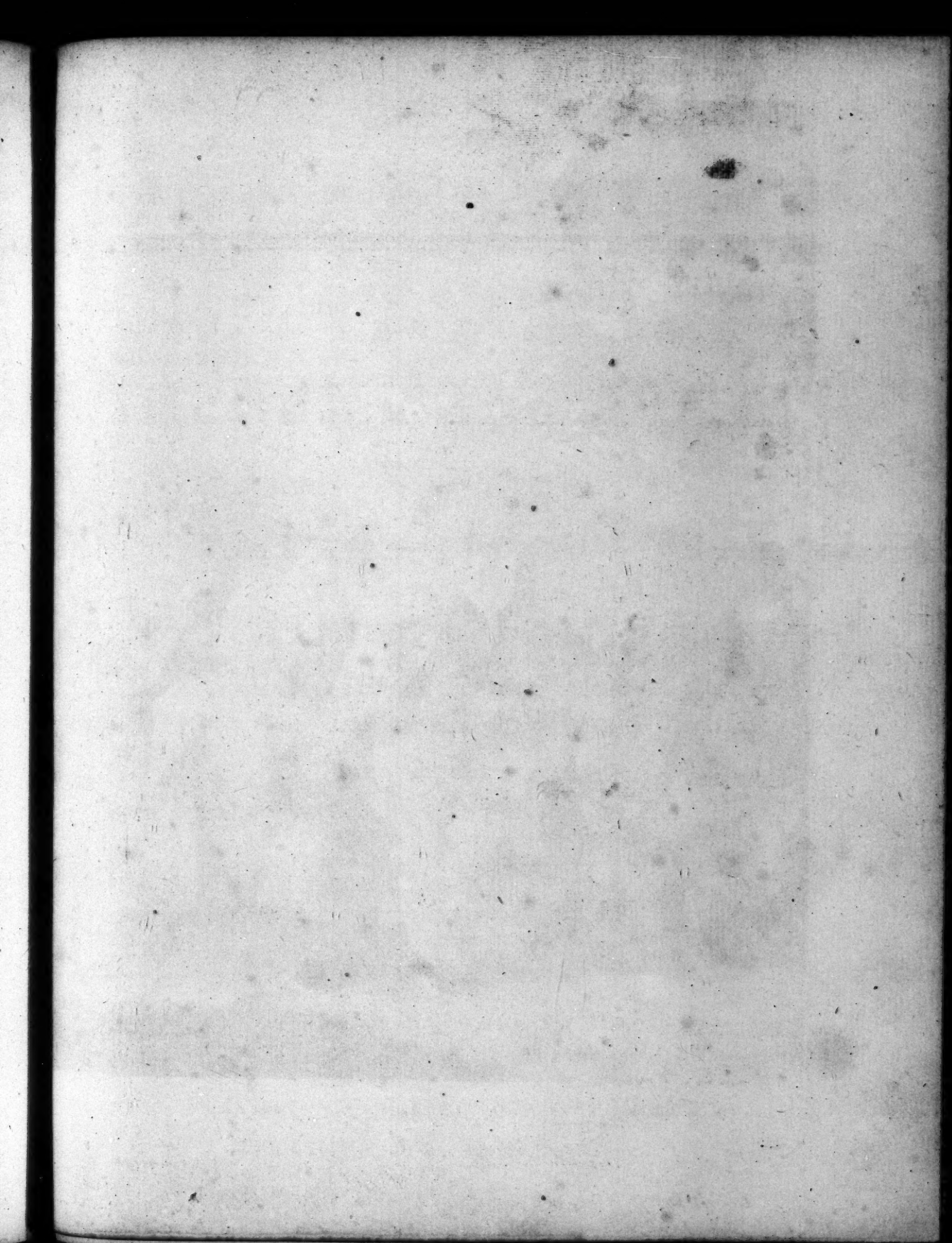
“ The nations free from MARS's rude alarm,

“ And rash PRESUMPTION totally disarm !

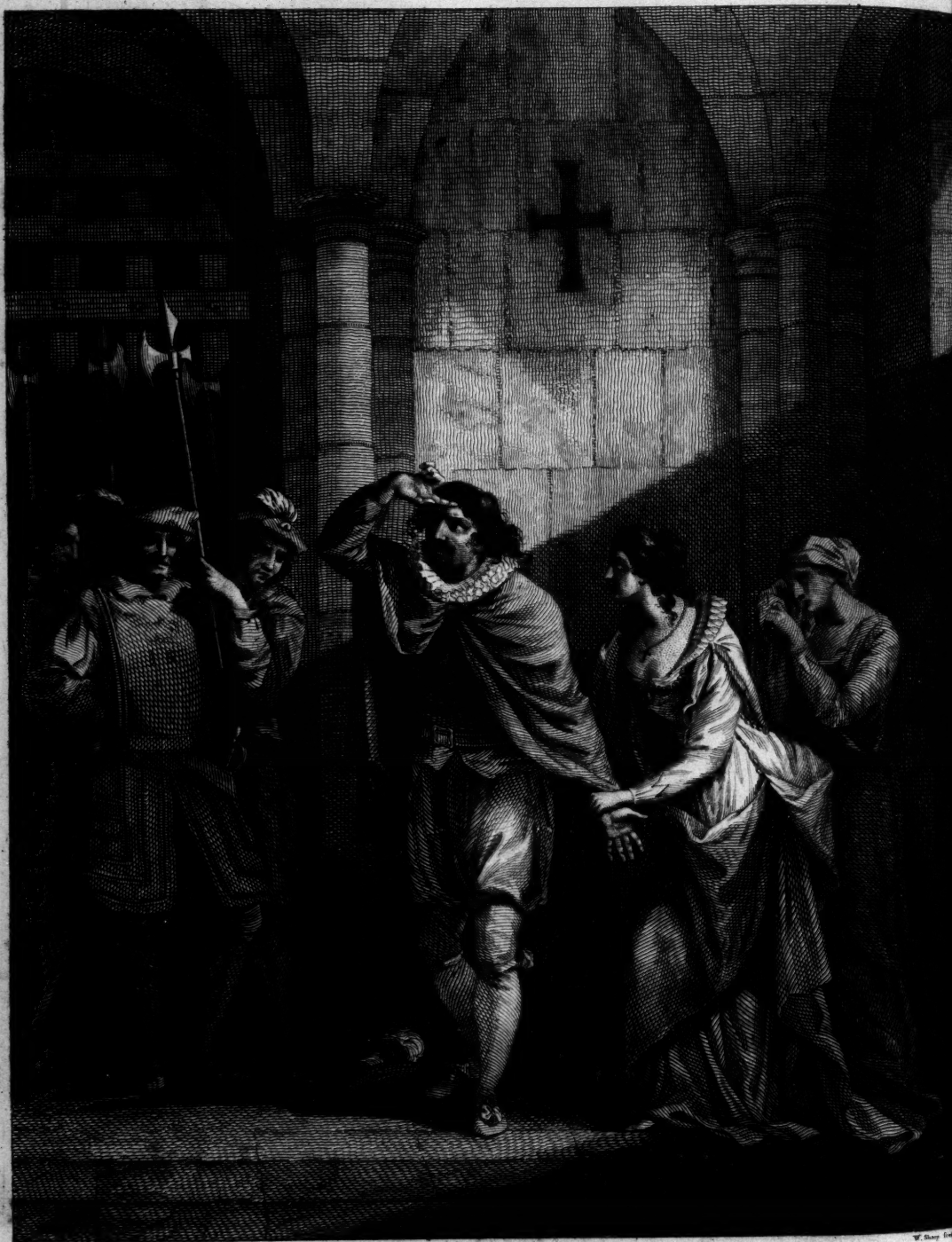
“ So may the WORLD, in CHARLOTTE's num'rous race,

“ Find sure protection, and eternal peace !”









The  
EARL of SOMERSET.

Act V. Scene the last.

*Countess. These sad reflections but enlarge Distress:  
"Forbear to think"*

---

THE  
EARL OF SOMERSET;  
A  
TRAGEDY,

Literally founded on History.

*Il y a deux manières d'instruire les hommes pour les rendre bons. La première, en leur montrant la*  
*DIFFORMITÉ DU VICE, & les suites funestes. C'est le DESSEIN PRINCIPAL de la TRAGÉDIE.*

*Discours de la Poësie Epique, par l'Abbé BOSSU.*

The method of instructing mankind, in order to MAKE THEM GOOD, is twofold. The first  
consists in shewing them the deformity of VICE, its deadly and destructive consequences. This  
is the PRINCIPAL DESIGN OF TRAGEDY.

---

THE  
EARL OF SOMERSET;

A  
TRAGEDY.

Originally founded on History.

The character of the Earl of Somerset is here presented in a new manner, and the story is told in a more interesting and dramatic manner than in any of the former editions. The story is taken from the history of the reign of Henry VIII. and is a very interesting and dramatic one. The story is told in a more interesting and dramatic manner than in any of the former editions. The story is taken from the history of the reign of Henry VIII. and is a very interesting and dramatic one.





PREFATORY ADDRESS:

WITH

The *CONFLICT*, a TALE.

TO THE READER.

**B**RUYERE, the Sentimentalist of NATURE, writes——

“ That it is more difficult for an unknown Author

“ to get a work of real merit received, than for a known

“ Author to impose upon the Public a work of no merit

“ at all.”

Leaving the consideration of merit absolutely to the Reader; what BRUYERE says of the Writer in general, is tenfold more applicable to the Dramatist of this day; not with respect to the Public, but to the Managers of the Theatres.

iv      P R E F A T O R Y   A D D R E S S .

A few positions, necessary to defend this publication, may justify the assertion.

If pieces,\* revised and recommended by the first Critics, Dramatic as well as Classical, shall be left with a Manager near four years, and no interest or sollicitation can procure a decision relative to their performance; is not this tantamount to a refusal—not to say, the most disrespectful mode of refusal? Can sensibility brook the injury, or human life admit the delay? Can the Student sacrifice his time to such abuse?

Is not the recommendation of another Tragedy by the first Performer in Europe—who testified her strongest approbation by her desire to appear in the principal character, sufficient grounds to expect a trial on the Stage? I fancy this instance is unprecedented in the annals of the Drama.

But

\* The incontestable vouchers may be seen in the hands of our Author.

But what remedy for the Writer? None, but a public appeal. Where should the Stranger, abused as an Author, however industrious and ambitious to merit their applause, seek protection, but from their approved benevolence and candour??

On these premises have I sketched a full appeal: but profound respect for the most exalted Personage to, whom this work is addressed, and for the Patrons, who have honoured it with their names, restrains me from entering here on dramatic controversy, however important the subject; as the Theatre, in respect to morals, language, and entertainment, peculiarly deserves the general attention.

Besides, should public favour correspond with the private opinions of these Scenes; the fault shall not be mine, why that favour may not procure me, next winter, what years past have laboured in vain, a trial at their awful tribunal;



vi      PREFATORY ADDRESS.

tribunal; where alone success can derive profit to a work of this nature.

I own my pride in having several other Dramatic Pieces, some in no less private estimation than SOMERSET. I rejoice in having employed my early life—before my arrival at the Temple seemed attainable—in such honest labour; from the flattering hope, that they would be my Coadjutors to reach that desired end. I will now patiently abide the result, leaving it absolutely to public candour, and to the ensuing winter, to determine.

From this confidence of public protection—if deserved—do I present this sacrifice at their shrine—this Hope-offering; Hope, purchased hitherto with much expence and loss. Indulge me in the word “Sacrifice;”—for I had reason to expect, from the words of my very learned Friend, “several hundreds, with honour, from the performance of *Somerset*.”—Its performance I then held most certain.

## PREFATORY ADDRESS

ivii

certain. I hope the explanation will be unnecessary ; and that I shall not have cause to exclaim, with HAMLET—

“ O what a falling-off is here ! ”

But the end must crown the work—the trial is at hand.

This public favour, if attainable, will be thrice dear to me ; as nothing, but their patronage, can, as SHIRLEY expresses it—“ bind up, in such a critic age, the wounds “ which IGNORANCE has planted upon Wit, and the PRO- “ FESSORS.”

In aid of SHIRLEY's wish, I penned the following Tale ; THE CONFLICT between the TIME's REPROACH, DAME SCANDAL, and the POET. Hoping it will find favour with the indulgent Reader, I respectfully submit it, without further preface.

The

*The* CONFLICT,

A T A L E.

**I**N TIME's record no matter when,

As fiction 'tis of artless pen—

A Youth there liv'd, scarce known to FAME,

As such, what signifies a name!

But for remembrance only rated,

INFELIX, henceforth, be it stated.

Of honest Parents—as 'tis said—

This Youth was born, as such was bred:

Nor wholly destitute of knowledge,

Some time he studied at the *College*;

Where, combating vexations great,

He labour'd to enhance his fate.

Alas! how ineffectual prov'd

His study to be wise, and lov'd!

In



# PREFATORY ADDRESS.

ix

In præmiums tho', and honours high,

—This fact ev'n MALICE can defy—

Their transient glories pass'd away,

Without attracting FRIENDSHIP's ray!

For know, KIND READER! 'twas a time,

When FRIENDSHIP was a heinous crime;

And, tho' some promises were given,

Not one was register'd in Heaven.

But say!—did not a PARENT's care

Perform the duties of his sphere;

Allay the rigours that oppress,

And harrow'd up his tender breast?

“A PARENT!”—bond how little known!

—For long the female bird was flown—

Still, as the subject was renew'd,

How were his faculties subdu'd!

And sighs, in fault'ring accents, flow,

Express'd the measure of his woe!

F

“Thy

## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

- " Thy sable curtain, GRIEF, let down !  
 " Come, TEARS ! LIFE's past remembrance drown !  
 " And ere recall those scenes of woe,  
 " Yield me to DEATH, I'll greet the blow !—  
 " PARENT" !—but hold !— lest future blame  
 " Impeach the mention of the name ;  
 " Henceforth, allow that I had none,  
 " This principle from HORACE known.

- " EARTH's boasted \**genus, proavos*,  
 " Derive no merit down to us :  
 " Or, as by GAYTON 'tis translated—  
 " —GAYTON, the festivoous related—  
 " *What tho' my Ancients were JOHN of CUMBER,*  
 " *If I no worth have, I'm but of the number.*

Hence then no PARENT let us trace,  
 Let NATURE occupy the place !

And

\* *Nam genus et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,*  
*Vix ea nostra voco.*—

HORACE.

## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

xi

And, from her counsels, let us prove  
Her frowardness, or kinder love!

'Tis held an axiom, clear as light,  
“What NATURE bids is always right”;  
And what her dictates shall suggest,  
To follow is true WISDOM's test;  
Which if we VIRTUOUSLY pursue,  
Both FAME and FORTUNE must accrue.

Not to oppose this gen'ral rule,  
With precepts from the WORLD's great school;  
Nor, by exceptions, counteract  
What were “*devoutly wish'd*” a fact;  
Let NATURE vibrate in the scales,  
Th' event may prove, which side prevails.

INFELIX, as the Tale declares,  
To SCIENCE gave his early years:



Where SHE illumines th'aspiring soul,  
Her influence who can controul?

Can he, once vers'd in CLASSIC lore,  
Descend to take the lab'ring oar;  
His thoughts, his scholarship degrade,  
To the MECHANIC's humbler trade;  
His books convert, his ready pen,  
To implements of low-bred Men?

Not so—here NATURE's deem'd most kind,  
Commanding to exalt the mind!  
For who's not by AMBITION led,  
Of VIRTUE lacks the fountain-head;  
“AMBITION,” NATURE's thirst for praise,  
Which great, and noble efforts raise!

From both then, calmly, let us scan,  
How was prescrib'd INFELIX' plan!

# PREFATORY ADDRESS.

xiii

Of learn'd professions, only three  
Engrafted are on SCIENCE' tree,  
LAW, PHYSIC, and DIVINITY.  
The last, most easy to attain,  
Floated but short time on his brain :  
Not from reflections misapplied,  
Two barriers that course denied ;  
CONSCIENCE and NATURE interfer'd,  
Perhaps, to his mischance, were heard ;  
Yielding to both, he turn'd astray,  
In hopes to find a better way.

PHYSIC and LAW in CONFLICT stood,  
To guide him thro' Life's swelling flood ;  
Tho' equi-distant either shore,  
Thus NATURE interpos'd her pow'r.

In PHYSIC—ANGUISH, GRIEF, and CARE,  
O'ershadow'd him with various fear ;

That

That DEATH's distressing, frequent fight  
Would put each gladsome thought to flight;  
And, SENSE absorb'd in others woe,  
What pleasure could this LIFE bestow;  
Till Sympathy of ANGUISH fled,  
His feelings were renounc'd, or dead!

Grant this were FOLLY's young alarms,  
LAW had preferr'd her dazzling charms:  
To early NATURE, she pourtray'd  
Her trophies, laurels rich display'd;  
Should ELOQUENCE, and STUDY join'd,  
In apt expression, shew the Mind!  
Enlisted thus, he ends the strife,  
And leagues with LAW, as MAN with WIFE.

In wedlock, as 'tis oft recited,  
The PRIEST is mentally indicted,  
Who, rashly, had conjoin'd each mate,  
In HYMEN's ill-confider'd state.



# PREFATORY ADDRESS.

xv

So MADAM LAW, perverse and proud,  
In her revilings soon grew loud :  
“ She wanted FORTUNE,” she declar’d—  
“ And, with expence, she must be rear’d ;  
“ For, sooner than forego her pride,  
“ She’d leave him, whatsoe’er betide.”

Alas ! INFELIX, NATURE’s heir,  
Her great demands had not to spare ;  
And tho’ he shudder’d at divorce,  
What method to prevent her course :  
In sad distress, he racks his brains,  
Till to DAME NATURE he complains ;  
She, absolute, and as in right,  
Decides the point—“ attempt to WRITE,  
“ So hold your Mistress still in fight.

“ To reach the Ladder’s topmost round,  
“ One only method can be found ;

“ Gain.

## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

" Gain the first rundle, then ascend,  
 " Till HOPE and TIME ensure the end !  
 " But touching not the lower step,  
 " How vainly at the summit leap !  
 " So thro'out my extended course,  
 " The maxim arrogates its force ;  
 " By gradual step, and timely care,  
 " You must expect a better sphere !  
 " Or what avails it, that you know,  
 " Tho' born a MANSFIELD, or a THURLOW ;  
 " Ev'n their bright talents to display,  
 " And shew their lustre to the day ;  
 " Both CIRCUMSTANCE and TIME must join,  
 " To raise them to their merit's line.  
 " The first, by FORTUNE yet deny'd,  
 " By me alone can be supply'd !"

So NATURE spoke—that such alarm  
 Might REASON of its pow'rs disarm ;

PREFATORY ADDRESS. xvii

Souls, more resolv'd perhaps, have known,  
And trembled at the danger shown;  
Retreated back, nor stood the test,  
Submitting to their FEAR's behest.

Not so INFELIX—Danger fir'd,  
'Twas NATURE to the task inspir'd;  
But—trivial incidents away—  
His MUSE must needs attempt—a PLAY.

Here the SPECTATOR fill'd his head,  
Where he imagin'd he had read,

“ A \* TRAGEDY's the boldest claim

“ To service, as immortal FAME!

“ Not FANCY, offspring of the BRAIN,

“ A greater trial can sustain;

G

“ Successful

\* In former Ages, exclusive of the professed Poets, the most eminent Personages, even some of the Fair Sex, took delight in the Drama, and prided themselves in this species of composition. Instances are numerous: I shall mention but three; the great EARL of DORSET, the EARL of ORRERY, and MARGARET, DUTCHESS of NEWCASTLE.



“ Successful there, doubt not to prove

“ Your Country’s kindness, and her love!”

Seduc’d by such sophistification,

INFELIX enter’d on his station :

While setting free wild FANCY’s scope—

Who fed him, day by day, with hope—

Forward he look’d, expecting TIME

Might draw ATTENTION to his Rhyme ;

ATTENTION might ASSISTANCE draw,

So heal the breach ’twixt him and LAW.

Fir’d with the thought, he takes the pen,

Writes and revolves ; then writes again,

Till soon was finish’d ev’ry Scene.

Ask him, who deals in prose, or verse—

With GENIUS partial or perverse—

If, without this presumptive thought,

“ That ev’ry line’s with merit fraught”—

## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

xix

A second ever would succeed,  
Or arm the writer for the deed?  
For, howsoever false or vain  
This phantom of the PoET's brain;  
Take the delusion once away,  
No mental work would see the day.

INFELIX, PoET-like, thus blind,  
With flattery assuag'd his mind;  
How few are proof against the fact,  
Or take not pleasure in the act!  
But fewer its delight forego,  
When their chief solacement of woe;  
Grand source of HOPE, AMBITION-fed,  
When ev'ry other prospect's fled!

O short delusion! storms of CARE  
Too soon assail'd INFELIX' ear:  
REPROACH first thro' acquaintance ran,  
And thus, with wrinkled front, began;

## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

" Turn POET, in the LAW's despite,  
 " And, scorning my injunctions, write!  
 " How!—you expect to rise indeed,  
 " Who solid COKE disdain to read!  
 " What argument can he sustain,  
 " Who cramps, with poetry, his brain;  
 " Rhymes as he walks, nor thinks, with me,  
 " There's thrice the virtue—in a fee?

" Well may they say—a POET's wild,  
 " Whose faculties are so beguil'd;  
 " Who lends his reason to the POPE,  
 " And feeds with the Deluder, HOPE!  
 " Well may they cry—his sense is fled,  
 " Who sues to HONOUR for his bread!  
 " POET—but *modernize* the name,  
 " It sounds equivalent to SHAME."

" SHAME on his head!"—INFELIX cries—  
 " Who NATURE's bounty dares despise!

" For



PREFATORY ADDRESS.

xi

" For POETRY, like female grace,  
" Admits not ART, in NATURE's place ;  
" Oft she destroys, ne'er made a face !

}

" And now, since met on classic ground,  
" Deep let me probe the deadly wound !  
" From retrospect to former times,  
" Support the majesty of Rhymes !  
" And, in just argument, explore  
" The use design'd by NATURE's dow'r !

" Writers of ev'ry clime and age,  
" Renown'd in the historic page,  
" Alike these sentiments convey,  
" From HORACE to the present day.

" 'Tis to arraign the gift of HEAV'N,  
" To think her pow'rs unwisely giv'n ;  
" Nor on this kind and solid plan,  
" To meliorate the Sons of MAN !

" The

- “ The growing Offspring to advise,  
“ To curb their passions, as they rise ;  
“ With skill poetic, to compare  
“ The sweets of VIRTUE, with the snare,  
“ Which ARTIFICE, which FOLLY lays,  
“ In secret, to entrap their ways ;  
“ So point the different paths to view,  
“ The ills, or blessings, that ensue !

- “ If such the Poet's hallow'd use,  
“ What crime to load him with abuse !  
“ How wantonly do we condemn  
“ The wonder-working arm supreme,  
“ To make his gift obnoxious prove,  
“ To HEAV'N's first principle of love !  
“ For hurtful 'tis, or void at best,  
“ If, to its native use address'd,  
“ It fails of the intent, and claim  
“ To human service, as to fame.”

PREFATORY ADDRESS.      xxiii

REPROACH thus answers, in alarm,

“ This is poetic phrenzy’s charm ;

“ Was \* DEVON’s Duke so freely caught ?—

“ The TIMES a better lesson taught—

“ Or \* CAMDEN ? say ! how did he greet,

“ THE VISIT from DEATH’s awful Seat ?

“ Thus patronage is empty boast,

“ And now, the very Shadow’s lost !”

INFELIX, eager to reply,

Was interrupted by a sigh ;

When SCANDAL, † darting from her screen,

And rushing suddenly between,

Instant attack’d him, tooth and nail——

“ In serving me, you cannot fail !

“ And

\* Alluding to two Works most respectfully address’d to those noble Lords.

† SCANDAL, ENVY, SATIRE, &c. generally lie conceal’d, and shoot their arrows as in ambush.



- “ And mark ! how easy your \* deviation !  
 “ Send DIABOLIADS thro’ the nation,  
 “ Publish a new ANTICIPATION !  
 “ † *Sketch* CHARACTERS of LORD and DUKE—  
 “ While TRUTH presumes not to rebuke !  
 “ Diffuse them—’tis for gen’ral good,  
 “ More batten on it, than their food !  
 “ Your fortune’s made ; but mind, you spurn  
 “ All sense of VIRTUE, or return  
 “ To humble fare, to Beggar’s pottage,  
 “ Obscure, and starv’d in lowly cottage !  
 “ A recent instance let me quote,  
 “ Then put the question to the vote !

“ A

\* How easy the transition from PANEGYRIC to SCANDAL need not be insisted on here. MAN, like the current, that runs thro’ a corrupt soil, too soon partakes of the infection of the world.

† Of which the general remark was, that it was purchasing the hazard of “ *putting money in your purse,*” at the expence of making the greater part of mankind your enemies. To a generous soul, DEATH were preferable to such necessity.

- "A Lady, high in birth and station—  
 "If we may judge from show of FASHION—  
 "In purchasing a little book,  
 "Chanc'd on the Title-page to look:  
 "Bless me! cried she; I thought 'twas SATIRE;  
 "'Tis praise, I fear—*quite different matter!*  
 "But, as I heard Miss FLIPPANT tell,  
 "The subject's handled *pretty well*:  
 "Had he more wisely turn'd his pen  
 "To SCANDAL, that bewitching strain;  
 "Believe me, you had, o'er and o'er,  
 "Instead of one, fold twice a score;  
 "For while we sip it with our TEA,  
 "SCANDAL's the dear, the only PLAY!  
 "Be as it will—what \* Time to read?  
 "For PLEASURE not enough's decreed!

H Whence,

\* In modern acceptation, TIME was *decreed*, or constituted by Heaven, for PLEASURE only: the Day *not* sufficient; some *few* hours are *necessarily*, and very *unwillingly* borrow'd from the NIGHT: how *few* the Reader can determine.

" Whence, forc'd, we borrow from the NIGHT,

" *Some* hours, essential to Delight !

" Tho', MADAM SCANDAL, partly true

" The picture is, you've set to view !

" Restrain your flight—INFELIX cried—

" Sound argument is on my side ;

" Decisive too, I trust, 'twill prove,

" In honour, as the general love !

" How must the wretch degrade the MAN,

" Who follows such ignoble plan !

" Besides—the WORLD begins to see,

" The antidote 'gainst CALUMNY

" Is virtuous efforts to receive,

" So sink you in OBLIVION's grave ;

" There be CONTEMPT and SHAME your lot,

" Despis'd, deserted, and forgot !"

Here



PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxvii

Here SCANDAL laugh'd with both her eyes,  
And, with a scoffing air, replies :

“ This golden Shore who seeks to find,  
“ Steers 'gainst the present stream, and wind !  
“ But granting, that some future day  
“ Chance to give verdict against me ;  
“ And, some years since, the AUTHOR dead,  
“ His works be honour'd, *perhaps read !*  
“ Yet FALSTAFFE'S honour this, its Charm  
“ \* *Will set nor broken leg, nor arm !*  
“ Nor any solid good produce,  
“ To NATURE'S more immediate use.

“ PHILOSOPHERS *sublimely* prate  
“ Of FAME, that universal Cheat,  
“ Forgetting still that MAN must eat !  
“ But trust me, 'tis an air-bred bubble,  
“ A SHAKESPEAR'S Cauldron, full of trouble ;

H 2

And

\* SHAKESPEAR.

xxviii    P R E F A T O R Y    A D D R E S S .

“ And SILK-WORM-like, the web supplies,

“ To entrap itself, and forthwith dies !

“ Then follow me !—I’m all the Ton ;

“ Despise but FAME—your FORTUNE’s won !”

INFELIX, wounded in his pride,  
Still firm to HONOUR, thus replied :

“ Tho’ oft, alas ! in wordly strife,

“ The drowning wretch, who gasps for life,

“ Catches at straws to raise his head,

“ Or furnish NATURE’s claim to bread !

“ Shall SCIENCE’ Son, or NATURE’s Care,

“ Be driv’n to such extreme Despair !

“ Hence false alarm ! to TRUTH attend !

“ The honest BARD has many a friend ;

“ Wise to prefer the chaste design

“ To all the jingle of the line.

“ Your

PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxix

- " Your Colleague, slanderous REPROACH,  
" The baneful doctrine fain would broach;  
" Examples quote, that PATRONAGE,  
" Turn'd MISER, has forfok the age!  
" Whence drooping GENIUS sinks her head  
" As only from her bounty fed:  
" But HISTORY supports my side;  
" Then let th' important cause be tried!  
  
" If HALIFAX and DORSET's care  
" Rais'd PRIOR from his servile sphere;  
" NORTHUMBERLAND and PERCY great—  
" In Virtue equal, as in state—  
" DESPENCER, generous as sincere,  
" With many names, renown'd as dear—  
" Whose registry's no paper-scroll,  
" More deep engrav'd upon the Soul—  
" Look down on ALNWICK's grateful Bard,  
" His Theme was VIRTUE—SHE was heard!

" 'Tis



## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

" 'Tis urg'd ; when great \* ELIZA liv'd,  
 " Then Genius was caress'd, receiv'd !  
 " And since, that STEELE, and ADDISON,  
 " The royal favour often won !  
 " But vain the boast—behold that Shrine !  
 " There VIRTUE'S QUEEN, with eye benign,  
 " Vouchsafes a smile to honest lays—  
 " Her smile the most consummate praise !

" Thither my eager steps advance,  
 " Where SATIRE dares not point a glance ;  
 " Nor you, with your CERBEREAN tongue,  
 " Assault the humblest of the throng !  
 " Fly then, assur'd your CONFLICT's vain,  
 " While MAJESTY approves the strain !"

REPROACH and SCANDAL droop'd their head,  
 Their face Conviction overspread ;  
 Retir'd unwilling, and aghast ;  
 INFELIX to the Shrine with haste ;

On

\* Queen ELIZABETH.

PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxxi

On VIRTUE's altar fain to place,  
With all DEVOTION's fervent grace,  
The humble Off'ring of his Lays,  
Just tribute to great CHARLOTTE's praise !

---

Conscious indeed of the severe, ungenerous reflections cast upon Poetry and the POET, in this hyper-critic Age ; I have frequently been induced to think, that should the practice be justly censured, should it continue to be held as reproachful to the Professors, as it is generally injurious to their fortune ; would it not be humane in the Legislature to have POETS excommun'd, as they were said to have been from PLATO's Commonwealth ? The dread of punishment might save many from a future, perhaps too late repentance.

And yet the said Author adjoins to this remark the following consolatory words :

“ But

xxxii PREFATORY ADDRESS.

“ But yet AUGUSTUS, in the zenith of his empire,  
“ cherished them, and fate with them. If such abilities  
“ depresso not themselves by meane subjects, but keep up  
“ the gravity of their files in their due decorum, not  
“ making CORINNA’S of LEVIA’S, adulterating and estima-  
“ ting their fancies with unbecoming mixtures; they, and  
“ their writings too, may be fit company for the best  
“ Potentates in the world.”

To the eye of sensibility and candour, to the public  
decision, this important question is submitted.

Indulge me now, kind Reader, as an anxious Drama-  
tist, to add a few words in support of the following  
Scenes.

The disadvantages a work of this nature sustains from  
want of representation are many and great. Deprived of  
Scenery and Dress, divested of the powers of Action and  
Oratory, to impress the sentiments, awaken the passions,  
and,



## PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxxiii

and, as it were, command applause, borrow lustre, and derive support, from the merits of the Performers; it is obliged to court admittance to the Cabinet in NATURE'S simple garb, ungrac'd and unadorn'd; or, like a common suitor, without consequence or authority. The very idea of non-performance carries apparent disproof with it, and is as a mill-stone to depress it. But principally, exclusive of that profit, which can only be expected from the performance—for if patronage attends not the publication, if kindness be not deriv'd from that source, the heart-felt pleasure of having made such virtuous effort to deserve favour will be the only gain—but regardless of this, the young Dramatist is denied the chance of obtaining that fame, that public stamp, which a successful representation alone confers, and which BRUYERE remarks to be of such good consequence to the Author.

One objection—and I am proud to declare that it is the only one I have heard insinuated against the performance

xxxiv      PREFATORY ADDRESS.

of this Tragedy—is, that, being founded on the same portion of History with that of SIR THOMAS OVERBURY, lately revived, it would not answer.

To pass over this reflection on public discernment, let me refute this idea, in the words of the first Critic of the age—"that neither in scene, sentiment, or expression, "does this work coincide with SAVAGE's, or the altered "play of SIR THOMAS OVERBURY; therefore it is, in all "respects, an entire new Drama:"—he even added, that the words of my Prolocutor were unnecessary—

"Tho' SOMERSET and OVERBURY, here,

"On solid TRUTH and HISTORY appear;

"No line of SAVAGE, not his name was known,

"'Till ev'ry Scene was finish'd, and his own!"

*Prologue to SOMERSET.*

If its originality shall be found thus evident, its merits, as its defects, must confessedly be its own.

But

PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxxv

But give this objection its most imaginary weight; how will the tender Reader sympathize with me! how—if the following Scenes shall meet his approbation—will he acknowledge my loss of fortune, as of fame, when he is assured, that this Play was strongly recommended to the Managers before *OVERBURY* was in contemplation! I will not hazard the giving offence, by revealing the mystery.

As to the Subject of this Tragedy, the *BRITISH ANNALS* scarce furnish a superior: Please to hear my authorities.

It is observed by *DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON*—to whom permit me thus publicly to express my gratitude, for the peculiar kindness of his perusal, emendations, and good opinion of this work—'tis observ'd by him, in his *LIFE OF RICHARD SAVAGE*, treating of his Play—that “ the Story  
“ was that of *SIR THOMAS OVERBURY*, a Story well adapted  
“ to the Stage, tho' perhaps not far enough removed from  
“ the present age to admit properly the fictions necessary



“ to complete the plan: for the mind—which naturally  
 “ loves truth—is always most offended with the violation  
 “ of those truths, of which we are most certain: and we,  
 “ of course, conceive those facts to be most certain, which  
 “ approach nearest to our own time.”

If the mind—“ which naturally loves truth”—can receive this well-adapted story with all the ornaments of FANCY and FICTION; can it be less agreeable, to the same sensible mind, in all the majesty of well-known TRUTH? Herein—not to presume at a comparison with SAVAGE, but purely to support the originality of SOMERSET—will be found the essential difference of the works: the two last, and, I flatter myself, by far the two best Acts of this piece being carried on after the death of SIR THOMAS OVERBURY, which concludes the Drama of that name.

The celebrated *Abbé Bossu* also, in the Motto of this Work, gives the preference to this kind of Story—“ C’est  
 “ *le dessein principal de la Tragédie.*”

As

PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxxvii

As to the Characters; SOMERSET's offence is thus palliated by HISTORIANS—

“Such is the power of woman, such the influence of beauty, that even the sacred ties of friendship are broke afunder by the energy of those superior charms.”

It is therefore presumed, that the softening his Character, and that of the COUNTESS in particular—as far as could be done consistently—will meet with general indulgence, especially from the fair and delicate Reader.

By this means also, should the Piece ever be represented—and if not, would it not convey great instruction to a future Writer, who shall be so unfortunate as to direct his thoughts to the Drama, to have the reasons for its rejection assigned?—by this gentler touch, the Performers will avoid the shade, which the severity of historic truth, rigidly followed, would cast upon the acting, however excellent.

I shall

xxxviii    P R E F A T O R Y    A D D R E S S .

I shall close this subject with an extract from the Preface of a living Dramatist to one of his Works—he compliments the Manager with high encomiums—“for his  
“readiness to admit his Play, and his regard to the  
“smallest degree of merit, which, he says, is THE DUTY  
“OF EVERY MANAGER OF A THEATRE. THE DEGENERATE  
“STATE OF THE STAGE CAN ONLY BE IMPROVED BY GIVING  
“A FAIR SCOPE TO GENIUS,” &c. What a probable misfortune to me, that the adage should be verified, that  
“Great wits have short memories!” I most sincerely wish that further inference, or appeal, may, by the event of these Scenes, be rendered totally unnecessary.

Let me entreat to be understood thro’out, that it is far from my wish, or present intention, to encounter again the Hydra of Dramatic Writing; not from the difficulty of the composition—for its mental pleasure and improvement I freely admit—but for the reasons before alledged.

I hope



PREFATORY ADDRESS. xxxix.

I hope henceforth studiously to court a more profitable, and, according to general prejudice, a more honourable profession. But let SENSE and CANDOUR determine, whether the other Dramatic labours of my youth should be committed to the flames, in contempt of critical opinions, and the recommendation of the first Performers; I might add, with truth, the approbation of one of those pieces by a principal Manager? I shall be obliged for their decision, and tacitly obey.

I shall add no more here, but to request the kind Reader's acceptance of this HOPE-offering, the tribute of my best, tho' poor abilities. It is presented to gracious MAJESTY, to my much honoured Patrons, and to the Public, with all possible respect, with sincerest gratitude, and with the tremblings of a heart awed by the consciousness of their superior judgment, and the alarm of their decisive opinion.

With

xl      P R E F A T O R Y   A D D R E S S .

With these sentiments can I avoid exclaiming, as HORACE to his book, Adieu !

*Vive, vaeque !*

Live and prosper !

which is the present anxious wish of him, who is proud to subscribe himself, with truth,

Most indulgent Reader,

Your most obliged, devoted,

and

Obedient, humble Servant,

H E N R Y   L U C A S .

*London,*

*July 1, 1779.*

P R O L O G U E.

[Enter two Lawyers, as into Court, dressed; with Briefs, &c.

They enter wrangling.]

FIRST LAWYER.

THIS, MR. SERGEANT! is a Cause of weight,  
On which depends a Brother STUDENT's fate!  
A POET's too—

SECOND LAWYER.

POET—ha! ha! ha! [Laughs heartily.

First.

Say—where's the jest?

A lawful Poem is a serious feast—

K

Second.



Hear but my Witneſſes, with kind applauſe ;

[*Pointing behind the Scenes.*]

If they *demur*, give judgment 'gainſt my Cauſe !

*Second.*

Proceed !—now mark the Plagiary and wiles !

[*To the Audience.*]

*First.*

To order, Sir ! Ye Fair, whoſe ruling ſmiles

Ev'n critic Malice of its ſting beguiles !

If female violence be render'd <sup>m</sup>wild,

When ſuff'ring Honour makes his COUNTESS wild ;

If, with a gentler touch, her lines he drew,

'Twas for your favour, to conciliate You !

You're the bright Stars, that gild the PoET's ſphere,

Direct his hopes, and diſſipate his fear !

*Second.*

Soft, MR. FLOW'RY ! you forget the Gods !—

And all muſt tremble, if OLYMPUS nods—

*First.*

*First.*

Not when it nods, as now, with sweet assent;  
 I greet my Client with the rich portent !  
 Away !—the Stars above have wiser notion !

*Second.*

How ! do all smile ?—thus I withdraw my motion—

[*Flings down his Brief in a passion, and exit.*]

*First.*

Ha ! ha ! ha !

A Counsel yield his Cause !—Like this to me,  
 His Client must be *Pauper*—as to *Fee* !  
*Poets* and *Paupers*—to the Age's shame—  
 Differ in very little—but the name !

Yet dire AMBITION ICARUS mislaid ;  
 If she alike distracts our POET's head,  
 This night decides his frailty : then attend !  
 And, oh ! with-hold your verdict to the end !  
 If then propitious ; grateful for to-night,  
 His constant Study shall be Your Delight !



P E R S O N S.

M E N.

JAMES I. King of ENGLAND.

ROBERT CARRE, Viscount ROCHESTER, and Earl of SOMERSET.

Sir THOMAS OVERBURY.

Essex.

Earl of

BEDFORD.

NORTHAMPTON.

SUFFOLK.

ABBOT, Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

Sir RALPH WINWOOD.

\*Sir WILLIAM CADE, } Lieutenants of the Tower.

\*Sir JERVIS ELLIS,

WESTON, Guards, Attendants, &c. &c.

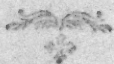
W O M E N.

ANNE, Queen of ENGLAND.

COUNTESS of ESSEX.

SCENE, at LONDON.

\* Some Historians call the former WADE, and the latter Sir JERVAIS YELVIS.





THE EARL OF SOMERSET.

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THE  
EARL OF SOMERSET.

---

A C T I.

SCENE I. ROCHESTER'S Apartment.

ROCHESTER, Sir THOMAS OVERBURY.

ROCHESTER.

SPARE me, my Friend! in fond compassion, spare!  
Nor, with the woundings of a vain remorse,  
Inflame my pangs at his unlook'd-for coming!

OVERBURY.

Consider, good my Lord! 'tis FRIENDSHIP pleads—  
FRIENDSHIP, by long experience of success,  
So marvellously prov'd, surpassing hope—

ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER.

## ROCHESTER.

Yes! ever shall I own, with boasted pride,  
 That thro' devouring quicksands of the court,  
 Thou'lt steer'd my lab'ring bark—its mazes all—  
 Since first, with devious steps, my giddy youth  
 The wilds of greatness trod—thou hast reveal'd!  
 'Tis by thy counsel that I rule supreme  
 In JAMES's heart, and turn the helm of state!  
 When therefore, dazzled at the precipice,  
 I view thee not, as source of all my honours;  
 Swift may that pow'r, to which thy hand has rais'd me,  
 Speed my deserved fall, and sink me down  
 Far, far beneath, as now my fate's exalted!

## OVERBURY.

Does this my zeal your gratitude arraign,  
 Or glance mistrust on me?—this honest zeal,  
 Which, combating your favour, hard entreats,  
 That you, in time, break from the circling charm,  
 And banish from your heart the fair Enchantress?

ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER.

Have you forgot, you once approv'd my suit,  
Taught me to combat, to subdue her coyness,  
And wind me to possession of her heart?  
Yet to oppose me in this new distress!

OVERBURY.

Hear me, my Lord! what now seems my reproach,  
Was courtly prudence then: for, Essex absent—  
Nor Rumour even whispering his return—  
Knowing intrigue all-prevalent at court,  
I thought such conquest would endear you more  
To FASHION, and your PRINCE, compliant JAMES!  
Thence, unsuspecting that Love's magic power  
Could, to another's right, enchain you thus,  
Rashly I yielded to your gallant passion!  
But Essex since return'd!—

ROCHESTER.

Discordant sound!

O name him not! and thou, too rigid grown,

L

Strain



## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

Strain not thy thoughts, with such severity,  
 Beyond the general virtue of the times!  
 Ill suits reproof with anguish great as mine!—  
 Nor art thou wont to leave me to the storm,  
 But, as a faithful Pilot, safely guide me,  
 To the beloved harbour of my wish!

OVERBURY.

How, my dear Lord! oppose the tempest's rage,  
 The dire necessity to yield her up,  
 To ESSEX' legal claim—

ROCHESTER.

Unnatural right!

Tho' marriage, form'd in violence and youth—  
 For oft' with tears the COUNTESS told me all—  
 From LAW exacts support; yet LOVE is free,  
 Scorns all restraint, nor human statute owns:  
 On that I build my triumph—

OVERBURY.

THE TRAGEDY.

3

OVERBURY.

What triumph  
Can REASON plead, where female honour stoops,  
A sacrifice to PRIDE—to—

ROCHESTER.

To PRIDE—ha! [*Muses.*

OVERBURY.

That wounds with some remorse! [*Aside.*

Judge you, my Lord! [*To him.*

What fault in ESSEX colours her dislike!  
Is he not handsome, young, and well accomplish'd?  
What then, but female VANITY and PRIDE,  
Could even a MONARCH's love unchaste, prefer  
To HONOUR's sacred name?

ROCHESTER.

Your words strike deep!

OVERBURY.

My Lord, be wise! improve the sweet impression!

ROCHESTER.

## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

ROCHESTER.

Yet—hence these fears!—avert this false alarm!  
 Her actions all disprove it—'midst the court—  
 Where swarms abound, in youthful Beauty's pride—  
 None ever gain'd a smile, a look, but me!  
 Then say not VANITY, but LOVE's distinction—  
 Which ESSEX' scornful absence well approves,  
 And, but for his return—

OVERBURY.

There hold, my Lord!  
 Reflect on that, and check this amorous heat!  
 Besides a HUSBAND's right—

[ROCHESTER turns away, displeased.]

Nay, I must speak!

Now's the true time to save you from yourself,  
 And perfect all I've labour'd in your service—  
 Besides a Husband's legal, virtuous right,  
 ESSEX has potent friends—

ROCHESTER.



THE TRAGEDY.

7

ROCHESTER.

What Friends has Essex,  
That share a glance of that all-ruling Sun,  
Wherein I bask unrivall'd!—what his Friends,  
To that support alone, which princely JAMES  
Unbounded heaps upon me!—

OVERBURY.

O yet beware!  
Fore-warn'd bethink, how great a HUSBAND's right,  
How numerous his Friends! ev'n in these times—  
These liberal times of ease and gallantry—  
A HUSBAND's right bears potent sway in ENGLAND.  
'Tis VIRTUE's cause, my Lord! the cause of all;  
And, tho' by ART OF INTEREST delay'd,  
VIRTUE her own resource must soon draw forth,  
To counteract the secret deeds of VICE,  
Of RAPINE and OPPRESSION—

ROCHESTER.

No more—no more!—  
I will reflect—

OVERBURY.

## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

## OVERBURY.

One word, the sum of all!—

Warm in regard, by HONESTY embolden'd,  
Fain would I teach—what sage EXPERIENCE proves—  
How short-liv'd is the date of courtly favour!—  
There SLANDER haunts unseen—there MALICE stalks,  
Confederate with ENVY, in the dark!  
There JEALOUSY, that mean, and female VICE,  
Watches, like SATAN, at the royal ear,  
To taint, and to corrupt it!—Be then advis'd!  
And yielding to the counsel of your Friend—  
And greater truth in friendship ne'er was prov'd—  
Reflect upon the danger, and avoid it!

## ROCHESTER.

Yes, thou sincere, but rigid Monitor!  
REFLECTION will prevail, as LOVE grows calm;  
Now she entwines her chains around my heart,  
And TIME alone—but hark! some foot-step sounds—  
Retire, my Friend!—['Tis the dear COUNTESS comes. [*Afide.*

I prithee

I prithee leave me now! I will reflect—

Adieu—a while—[She's here! *[Aside.*

*Enter the COUNTESS.*

RÖCHESTER. *[Runs and embraces her.*

My soul's delight!

First object of my wish!—

OVERBURY. *[Aside.*

Now her least note

My half-gain'd cause perverts—Delusive SYREN!

Fair thus to view, what subtilty beneath!

*Exit frowning, she observing him.*

SCENE. RÖCHESTER, The COUNTESS.

RÖCHESTER. *[Thence my distresses said,*

O trebly welcome, in this dire alarm,

Rais'd by detested—tho' too-happy ESSEX!

What tho' in ignorance of Youth, I yielded to  
To

COUNTESS,



THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

COUNTESS.

That epithet from thee but ill befits  
Lord ESSEX, if my love's assign'd the cause!  
Far other lesson thou hast taught my heart,  
And, in his absence, gain'd a victory,  
I tremble to behold!—REMORSE and HONOUR  
Throb in my breast, and combated by LOVE,  
Raise anarchy within!—

ROCHESTER.

Wherefore degrade  
Your beauty's charms, to cast a thought on ESSEX?  
Who fled that heard of sweets with such contempt,  
As surfeited with raptures, far above  
His low conception, and degenerate soul!

COUNTESS.

Thence my distresses flow—had ESSEX staid,  
Nor left me, all unguarded, to assault!  
He might have sooth'd my temper to his love!  
What tho', in ignorance of YOUTH, I yielded

To

To give my hand compell'd!—yet ESSEX here  
 Might have subdu'd me all—no tongue, but his,  
 Had dar'd to utter LOVE's bewitching tale;  
 No ROCHESTER had ventur'd to approach me,  
 Nor rais'd this tempest here, this wreck of thought!

ROCHESTER.

Had I beheld you, as another's right,  
 By your free choice, and love consummated;  
 CONSCIENCE a while might struggle with your charms,  
 And start some idle qualms—but when I mark'd,  
 How ESSEX' scorn so justly wak'd your rage;  
 My LOVE knew no restraint, and sigh'd at large,  
 'Till blest'd with fond indulgence of my hopes,  
 Which may his hated presence ne'er destroy!

COUNTESS.

Alike the task to feed, as quench the flame!  
 LORD ESSEX presses with a Bridegroom's right—

ROCHESTER.

There OVERBURY wounds—

[*Aside.*

M

COUNTESS.

## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

COUNTESS.

And, aided by a Father's harsh command,  
Would force his claim, as they could rule my heart.

ROCHESTER.

O torment and despair!

[Sighs.]

COUNTESS.

Whence is that pang?  
Sought you my presence here, to whine with GRIEF?

ROCHESTER.

Thou softest soother of my misery!  
[Can VANITY dwell there—Yet OVERBURY—]

[Half aside. Sighs.]

COUNTESS.

These sighs alarm me, prefacing to ill!  
Twice have you paus'd on OVERBURY's name,  
And join'd it now with hated appellation  
Of VANITY in me!—What VANITY  
Could dare to interpose 'twixt HONOUR's call;

Make



Make me withstand Relations, Friends,—nay, ~~HUSBAND~~—  
For the bewitching love I bear to thee?—

ROCHESTER.

Oh! how my heart acknowledges the truth!

Yet ~~OVERBURY~~—

[Sighs.]

COUNTESS.

'Tis most clear reveal'd!

Oft have I seen, and now observ'd the Pedant  
Frown fullen discontent—then, mark me well!—

If, to this rigid Monitor's controul,

Thus blindly you submit your love, your fear;

Straight yield me up, my rash-form'd hopes resign,

And give me back to ~~HONOUR~~, and to ~~ESSEX~~!—

ROCHESTER.

My all of love, or fear! swell not our pangs,

With recollection of this double grief!

COUNTESS.

Methinks, at such a time, he might have spar'd

His froward zeal!—but—ere his arts surprise,

14 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

And gain a joint possession of your heart—  
Yield me at once—I scorn a parted throne;  
We cannot reign together—

ROCHESTER.

Thou art unrivall'd,  
Sole Empress of my heart! but, Miser-like,  
When ruffians violent his store assail,  
His idol-treasure; strait he calls, in aid,  
Whom first kind FORTUNE sends—So OVERBURY— [Sighs.

COUNTESS.

Again that sigh! give me to know the cause,  
Or bid me hence—for ever— [Going.

ROCHESTER.

In pity, hold!  
And trust me, Love!— [Where would my passion drive!  
[Aside.

In a less-busy hour, you shall know all—

But now, when thought is eager on the wing,  
To grasp, to fix you mine—so crown my triumph!

COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Since thou hast triumph'd—since my heart avows it—  
O fearful thought!—

ROCHESTER.

Why think of fear,  
With JAMES's second self—his—

COUNTESS.

On him alone  
Refts ev'ry hope, of perfect, mutual love,  
Of honour, peace, and happiness secur'd!

ROCHESTER.

Explain, thou Charmer!—who hast rais'd my soul,  
From darkness to Elysium!—speak the means!—

COUNTESS.

His boundless favour yields to each request—  
And faithful TURNER, MAGIC's darling Child,  
From medicinal skill, ensures divorce;  
And on the order of a speedy trial—  
Which JAMES's voice commands—founds all success—

ROCHESTER.



ROCHESTER.

Esteem it done!—so art thou wholly mine,  
Firm as—

ESSEX. [*Within.*

I will not be denied—

ROCHESTER.

Hark—a noise!

COUNTESS.

'Tis the audacious Essex!—pray, retire!

ROCHESTER.

Rather command to punish his intrusion—

COUNTESS.

So blast each scheme of Hope!

ROCHESTER.

Yet thus to part—

Distraction!

COUNTESS.

He comes—I prithee, leave me!

ESSEX.

A TRAGEDY.

17

ESSEX. [*Within.*

Avaunt, ye Slaves!—a BRITISH Husband claims  
Admittance here, where-e'er his Confort's free!

[*He rushes in, as she forces out* ROCHESTER.

SCENE. ESSEX, *The* COUNTESS.

ESSEX. [*Aside.*

Ha! ROCHESTER!—the truth's too clear—she's lost!  
Farewell to HOPE!—yet my fond love will try  
This final effort to attract regard!

[*To her, who stands confus'd.*

Turn, Madam, turn! behold, a Husband woos,  
Fondly folicits, as an humble Suitor,  
That preference, which LAW, which HONOUR claims—

COUNTESS.

'Think not the fetters of compulsive Law  
Can chain th' unwilling Mind!—What tho' its pow'r  
Confer'd a right untimely; ere, with years,

The

18 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

The sense of Judgment could my choice approve;  
 Ere Freedom's sanction could the bond confirm,  
 Perpetual, as mutual—soon the Heart  
 Turns truant, and rebels against that claim,  
 Which Love alone confers!

ESSEX.

Bear witness, TRUTH!

From gentleness alone would I derive  
 All claim to LOVE, and you—say then, what act—  
 What, since my wish'd return—

COUNTESS.

There hold, my Lord!  
 Nor touch the master-string of discord in me!  
 "Your wish'd return"—my Sex's pride disdains  
 To admit a thought, that love, and scornful absence,  
 In the same breast could find sufficient room!

ESSEX.

Blame not that absence, by our Friends enjoin'd,  
 Unwillingly



Unwillingly upon me; rather think,  
 That—as a flame long smother'd and depress'd—  
 Constraint will give new ardour to my love,  
 And ample restitution quit the past—

COUNTESS. [*Afide.*

How vain his plea!—that absence has undone me!—

ESSEX.

Nay, turn not hence—but take me, more enamour'd!  
 Oblige your Friends; and, in our future bliss,  
 Be all displeasure drown'd!—call yet to mind  
 The former, fond endearments of our youth!

COUNTESS.

Endearments! What!—too early join'd—alas!  
 What knew I then of Love, but by the name!—  
 Our Guardians', nay, our Sovereign's will conjoin'd,  
 In the first dawn of youth, our hands, not hearts,  
 In marriage ill-advis'd!—four years elaps'd,  
 Time and your absence the rash act expos'd,

Taught me to recompense your scorn with scorn,  
And, from example, wean you from my thoughts !

ESSEX.

Talk not of scorn, or influence of example !  
Call my Companions to the strictest test !  
They witness'd to my sighs, my tears of absence ;  
They mark'd the tender throb of heart-felt joy,  
At each account receiv'd of Love, and You !  
Tho'—from what cause I could not then divine—  
Sullen and seldom your late pacquets came—  
These my Companions all—

COUNTESS.

O challenge not  
Those *dear* associates to accuse themselves,  
Convicting your deceit !—Immers'd alike  
In foreign pleasures ; false, licentious Man—  
The tie of HONOUR and of LOVE remov'd—  
Scorning restraint, obeys his haughty will,  
And revels—

ESSEX.

Essex.

Forbear the unjust reproach!—

[Tho' all seems vain, yet will I tempt her still!] [*Aside.*

Why wander in the dark?—forget the past!

My future life shall large atonement make,

Then yield thee to my love!

Countess.

Not all this art

Erases the impression of your scorn!

And where distrust of happiness abides,

There CONFIDENCE, LOVE's pilot, quits the helm,

Nor takes the steerage more—DESPAIR, REMORSE,

Then haunt the nuptial couch, and ev'ry dream

Is anguish, and distraction—

Essex.

These phantoms dire

My absence has engender'd; or, more true—

For now I'll speak, depriv'd of ev'ry hope,

That



That you will e'er return to Love, and me—

LORD ROCHESTER engender'd in my absence—

COUNTESS.

Ha! ROCHESTER!—[Then I must brave the storm!

[*Afide.*

ESSEX.

For him your heart would shadow this repulse!

What! does the royal favour, poorly wasted

On this proud Minion, make him thus presume!

COUNTESS.

Greater presumption to impeach my honour!—

Oh! glorious prospect of connubial joy,

Of happiness with thee!—

ESSEX.

Madam! to me—

The very shadow's lost—it centers all

In more attractive ROCHESTER: tho' FAME

SUSPICION's note swells high; Conviction now

Flash'd her full blaze upon me, as I enter'd—

COUNTESS.

## COUNTESS.

I'll hear no more!—mark me, imperious Lord!  
 Since 'tis decreed my heart can ne'er be yours,  
 Why urge my further scorn by idle taunts,  
 Or hopes to force my will, resolv'd and free?— [Exit.

## SCENE. ESSEX. [Alone.

Degenerate Fair! haste thee to ROCHESTER!—  
 But why solicit more?—'tis all in vain!—

Come then, thou precious balm of minds aggriev'd,  
 Healing REVENGE! possess me, and dry up  
 This canker of my Love!—yet—ROCHESTER—  
 Such royal favour guards him, that assault  
 Were worse than treason there!—but secret means:  
 Effectual may be found!—our injur'd QUEEN,  
 With squint-eyed Jealousy, this Lord beholds,  
 Suspicious of his influence o'er the KING!  
 Much may be gain'd from that, as from my cause,  
 A Husband wrong'd, and violated Laws.



ACT II.

SCENE I. *The Countess, Northampton.*

COUNTESS.

**T**HAT he presumes to vilify our love,  
Seems clear, as noon-day Sun upon the hills !  
But, my dear Uncle ! I'd have proof convincing !—

NORTHAMPTON.

It scarce admits a doubt——

COUNTESS.

Befide ; his arts  
Prevent my kindred zeal to serve your worth,  
Spite of my influence o'er ROCHESTER——

NORTHAMPTON.

Yes ! like the bloated adder cros's my way,

He



He intercepts my passage to his heart,  
Eclipsing all my greatness—

COUNTESS.

Once remov'd,  
Your interest spreads apace—for, on the fall  
Of this presuming Knight, you rise secure,  
Sole Agent to LORD ROCHESTER—

NORTHAMPTON.

No more!

To a true Statesman, that's sufficient cause  
To labour his undoing—hold it near!

COUNTESS.

Performance is acquittal of your zeal!  
First then, attend this converse with my Lord—  
Whose wav'ring soul still ponders on the truth—  
That done; to \*JAMES this paper—hark!—he comes!

[\*Gives a paper.

Retire,

Retire, and watch!—that closet be your stand;

Fear not, assur'd each avenue is free!—  
[Exit NORTH.]

Whate'er th' event—my soul will be resolv'd!—

SCENE. *The* COUNTESS, ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER. [*Runs, and grasps her hand.*]

O my fond hope! my soul's delighted wish!

Retire a while!—Sir THOMAS comes, whose aid

Bespeaks a happy issue to our suit—

COUNTESS,

Love, strong as mine, admits not FRIENDSHIP's poise

To vibrate in the balance—one must yield;

And tho' my fame—my peace—

ROCHESTER.

This jealousy—

Tho' its alarm is Love's best evidence—

Subdue! in full conviction, that my heart

Admits no struggle 'gainst all-ruling Love!—

COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

That were a conquest worthy of us both—

ROCHESTER.

And, to secure its bliss, each thought employs!

Thence only have I order'd his attendance—

Tho' cold, and distant yet—

COUNTESS.

Tho' insolent—

Such term best suits his pride—for I have learn'd,

His *honest* tongue too *liberally* flows

In censure of our loves. But grant him all

Devoted to your wish; you much o'er-rate

His utmost service: since my gentle Father

Softens his violence, and zeal for ESSEX;

And since my gentler Uncle, LORD NORTHAMPTON—

Of place and high preferment, at your hand,

First guarantied by me—to royal JAMES

The dear petition of our hopes presents,

Where centers ev'ry wish—

O

ROCHESTER.



## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

ROCHESTER.

SIR THOMAS WEN,

No fearful doubt remains—indulge me, then,  
In this last tryal of his gratitude!

COUNTESS.

On one condition—that, if froward still,  
FRIENDSHIP and OVERBURY are no more  
Connected with your heart—

ROCHESTER.

Thus ratify  
The gallant treaty, with this dear embrace—  
[Embracing her.

I hear a foot—he comes—retire, my Love!  
I'll follow strait, and greet you with the tidings  
Of this desir'd addition to our strength!

[Exit COUNTESS.

But soft—he's here—now, FRIENDSHIP, use thy pow'r!

SCENE.

SCENE. ROCHESTER, *Sir* THOMAS OVERBURY.

*During the Scene, NORTHAMPTON appears often behind, listening.*

OVERBURY.

O let my heart o'erflow, and share its transport !  
Your looks, and my recall, fore-speak your triumph ;  
And these my tears of joy !—

ROCHESTER.

O misplac'd zeal ! [*Aside.*]

OVERBURY.

Muse not, but boast this triumph o'er yourself !—

ROCHESTER.

Be not deceiv'd !—in you I hope to triumph,  
By new reflection chang'd, and Friendship's charm—

OVERBURY.

My Friendship, dearest Lord ! knows not a change,  
Nor can, like common Sycophants, betray

Its honest truth, to flatter foul desires,  
 It justly disapproves—nor can I see,  
 Whither this passion's wild extravagance  
 Directs its airy flight—

ROCHESTER.

How! not perceive,  
 I seek the full possession of her charms!—  
 In short—would marry ESSEX—

OVERBURY. [*Amazed.*

Marry the COUNTESS!

ROCHESTER.

Yes—marry—wed her—make her mine for ever!

OVERBURY.

PRUDENCE, FAME, VIRTUE, all forbid the bans!—  
 But how—how wed her!—Essex still lives—

ROCHESTER.

But when divorc'd, no longer is a Husband!—  
 'Tis there I want thy counsel!

OVERBURY.



OVERBURY.

Thus 'tis, my Lord,  
 In simple truth ; and give it heedful note :  
 Beware the difficult, invidious enterprize !  
 Think, how destructive to your growing hopes,  
 To wed another's Wife, by foul divorce  
 Of her most lawful Husband—danger—ruin—

ROCHESTER.

Talk not of ruin—niggard \*SALISBURY dead ;  
 I lord it, uncontroul'd, o'er yielding JAMES ;  
 What danger then—

OVERBURY.

Tho' private danger,  
 Awed by your pow'r, recede !—yet think, my Lord !  
 How so abhor'd an action, so unjust,  
 May bring a general odium on your head !  
 Arouse the public voice—whose loud-tongued cry—  
 Which

\* ECHARD, and WILSON in his 'Life of JAMES I. say, that this SALISBURY was crook-back'd. Most other writers mention his regard to public œconomy, whence ROCHESTER, in scorn, calls him *Niggard*.

Which stops not, 'till it reach the throne itself,  
 And makes even PRINCES tremble!—whose just cry  
 Has humbled the first Favourites of the realm,  
 Who, PASSION-sway'd, o'er-leap'd fair HONOUR's bounds,  
 And to Reproach—to Infamy—

ROCHESTER.

What Infamy  
 Attends the common practice of divorce?—

OVERBURY.

How gain divorce, my Lord? 'The KING himself—  
 Who wink'd, as partial to your gallantry—  
 First pillar of the law, must needs support—

ROCHESTER.

The KING, at pleasure, may with law dispense,  
 Which contradicts his Favourite's happiness—

OVERBURY.

O much-lov'd Lord! forbear the horrid thought!  
 Ne'er may a Subject's pow'r create division  
 Between the Prince, and his allegiant People!  
 Who breaks thro' law, destroys the strong cement,

That

That binds their mutual love; and be assur'd,  
The Caufer of infringement of the Law  
Shall find, at length, Law's vengeance rest upon him!  
O take me hence, good Heaven! ere such distress  
Pursue my Prince, or Patron, whom I love!  
Sink me to earth, that, in the peaceful grave,  
Such horror ne'er—

ROCHESTER.

No more!—you are too bold  
In this displeasing theme! I will not hear you—

OVERBURY.

Nay, I must speak! 'tis LOVE, 'tis DUTY's voice—  
And now, since FRIENDSHIP totters, he may ne'er  
His former footing gain; but this the last,  
The last free converse, I may be allow'd!—  
Hear then the latest effort of my truth!—  
If you despise all danger, even death,  
You cannot live the object of Reproach,  
The mockery of SHAME—a Husband's SHAME—

ROCHESTER.



ROCHESTER.

Can I bear this?—I shall forget myself—

OVERBURY.

You do forget yourself, your dignity,  
Wishing to wed a doubtful character—

ROCHESTER.

Ha! [*Starts.*

NORTHAMPTON. [*Behind. Aside.*

That stroke is worth an empire to my hopes!—

OVERBURY. [*Kneels.*

Thus lowly on my knee, which never yet  
To Man was bent before—see, OVERBURY  
Pleads, with the voice of FRIENDSHIP, to preserve  
Your fame, your honour.

ROCHESTER.

Rise—rise, I charge you—

OVERBURY.

Tho' Saint within, while the suspecting World—

ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER.

No more—'tis sacrilege to touch her fame!

[Breaks from him, angry.

OVERBURY. [Rises.

['Tis all in vain—blinded by LOVE and POWER,  
 He will not see the precipice beneath,  
 But rushes on the danger—[*Aside.*] My Lord, I've done!  
 And, O my Soul! check those prophetic fears,  
 That rise in vision from this wild attachment!  
 Adieu, my Lord! and tho' my heart bewails  
 This wound to FRIENDSHIP, in my counsel scorn'd,  
 Its sorrows be its own— [Goes slowly out, weeping.

ROCHESTER.

[He weeps—fond Soul!

Have I no sympathy of FRIENDSHIP in me!—  
 Yes! but my Love—which will not be withstood!—  
 And, lest his zeal should counteract our schemes,  
 Compels me to deceit—[*Aside.*] Hold, SIR THOMAS!  
 REASON returns, as PASSION yields her throne

P

To

36 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

To GRATITUDE, and Thee!—I pray, excuse  
This youthful warmth, nor scan this subject more!  
Adieu!—the COUNCIL waits me—now, farewell!  
And hope immediate proof of my regard!

*[Conducts him out—returns.]*

ROCHESTER.

Ere he mow down the harvest of our wish,  
I'll seek occasion to remove him hence—  
At distance, and at leisure, he may cool!  
——But I delay; the KING and COUNCIL wait me!

*[Exit.]*

NORTHAMPTON comes forward.

What have I learn'd!—Here wants not FICTION's aid,  
To rouse a gentler spirit to revenge!—  
'Tis honest indignation—there I'll lay  
The base of my ambition—and his fall.

*[Exit.]*

SCENE.



S C E N E. *The Palace.*KING JAMES, *The* QUEEN.

KING. \*

E'en let the People think, since they presume  
 To raise their thoughts to sov'reign Majesty !  
 Let but our QUEEN be gentle ; nor henceforth,  
 By those sly shafts, obliquely bent on us,  
 Thro' ROCHESTER, our special Favourite,  
 Disturb our royal peace !

QUEEN.

My Lord ! beside  
 The People's thoughts—

KING.

Who gave them right to think.  
 Of Majesty divine ? or who regards  
 The hot-brain'd phrensy of their vulgar thoughts ?

P 2

QUEEN.

\* Our Author was particularly studious to give KING JAMES'S  
 Character, Sentiments, and Language, as near as he could to the  
 words of the best HISTORIANS.

QUEEN.

For me, fuspicion of his being concern'd  
In my dear HENRY's death, Son best belov'd,  
The firstling of my flock——

KING.

Malice all—  
The breath of ENVY, spirit of DETRACTION——

QUEEN.

Could we explore the truth——

KING.

Why rack our thoughts  
With such an irksome subject—We'll to Council! [*Exit.*]

QUEEN. [*Alone.*]

Besides this strong fuspicion; his disdain,  
His influence o'er the KING—which casts reproof  
Upon my due pre-eminence and rank——  
Enflame my royal hate——

[WINWOOD enters.]

SCENE.

SCENE. *The QUEEN, Sir RALPH WINWOOD.*

QUEEN.

My trusty WINWOOD!

WINWOOD.

My royal Mistress! knowing your dislike  
Of proud, aspiring ROCHESTER—whose power  
Insults us all, and heavy lights on me—  
Who bear the Secretary's empty name,  
While he the functions, and the fruits, devours—  
I hasten'd to acquaint you, that wrong'd ESSEX,  
With ABBOT, BEDFORD, and some Lords of strength,  
Thro' me, entreat to lay their griefs before you,  
And to concert revenge!—

QUEEN.

Yes, my WINWOOD!

Just anger shall have scope—but, as the KING  
Resents the meanest slight to ROCHESTER,  
Their conduct must be vigilant and sure!

WINWOOD.



## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

WINWOOD.

On their experience may your Highness trust—

QUEEN.

Bear then our greeting to them ; and therein  
 Assure them, we'll the precious time appoint  
 Of secret consultation—so inform them !

*[Exeunt severally.]*

S C E N E. *The Council-Chamber.*

*The KING, Earls of ESSEX, SUFFOLK, BEDFORD, and  
 NORTHAMPTON, ABBOT, Lords, and Attendants.*

KING.

Now, near four years, our triumph we've enjoy'd,  
 Free from the niggard Parliament's controul,  
 And clamorous opposition—for which boon,  
 Ye Coadjutors in such happy counsel !  
 Accept your Monarch's thanks, so justly due !  
 But first, to SUFFOLK ; who, since SALISBURY's death,

Haft

Has to our wants so well administer'd!  
 Say then, shall we that happiness prolong?  
 Or, from our finances' exhausted state,  
 Assemble them unwilling?—Speak, Lord SUFFOLK!

SUFFOLK.

Knowing, my Liege, your hatred to their meeting,  
 I've try'd the powers of art, and of exaction;  
 \*Forc'd Loans, Benevolence, Monopolies—

BEDFORD.

Pardon, my Liege! and you, my Lord of SUFFOLK!  
 If hastily I rise, and out of order!  
 We blame the COMMONS much; but overlook  
 The causes, that engender discontent—  
 Forc'd Loans—Monopolies—

SUFFOLK.

My Lord, forbear!  
 Light fall the blame on us, so new in power,  
 And that with caution us'd—since the high sale

\* By these, the Knighthood, and the Privy Seals, Historians mention, that the Sum of £200,000 was raised.

Of Pomp and Titles large revenue brings !—

Even NOVA SCOTIA's Knights—

ESSEX.

Detract not, Lord !

From SALISBURY's merit—his be all the praise !—

NORTHAMPTON.

Why thus severe, young Sir ? He, who adopts  
A useful measure, second honour claims

To the Inventor's self—

ABBOT.

True, most wise Lord !

If honour, or advantage, thence accrue—

KING. — [*Starts up.*]

Forbear these altercations—our command  
Doth sanctify each act ; and to dispute  
What Majesty may do, in height of power,  
Approaches the sedition of the COMMONS !—  
To them such odious controversy yield !—

For



For us—'till ev'ry source of wealth's dry'd up—  
 We'll hold the meddling Zealots off at bay;  
 Nor be confronted with abuses, feign'd  
 For their especial purpose—Now, my Lords!  
 The more immediate bus'ness is to send  
 Our embassy to RUSSIA—Why delays  
 The Partner of our Counsels, ROCHESTER?  
 Was he not summon'd?—

SUFFOLK.

He was, my Liege!

ESSEX. [*Afide.*

But my degenerate Consort stays his coming!

NORTHAMPTON.

And see! he's here!

KING.

Then rise—and each withdraw—

In private we'll determine!— [*They rise—and exeunt.*

ABBOT. [*Afide.*

Such scorn for him! [*Exit.*

## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

*The KING descends, to receive ROCHESTER.*

KING.

Welcome, my faithful, best-lov'd ROCHESTER!

[*Embracing.*]

Essex.

[*Apart.*]

Oh! for the hour of vengeance, and his fall!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE. *The KING, ROCHESTER.*

KING.

Thou Counterpart of sacred Royalty!  
 Model of JAMES, the Pupil of his hand!  
 But that these faucy cares, obtrusive, press  
 Against our sovereign wish; how fondly would we  
 Employ our festal reign, devoted still  
 To jollity and thee!—But Majesty  
 Bears on his shoulders a whole PEOPLE's weight;  
 Oppressive weight of cares—

ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER.

O with what joy  
Would I sustain them for my Master's sake!

KING.

Thou Soul congenial! nay, our second self!  
What comfort does thy tenderness afford,  
Dividing still our heart! Now then, your choice  
Appoints the fit Ambassador for Russia—

ROCHESTER.

*[Aside.]*

[Happy occasion to remove SIR THOMAS!]  
What thinks my gracious Lord of Overbury?  
Of parts approv'd—

KING.

Urge not a single cause—  
Your voice, like ours, creates!—but see'st thou this,  
*[Taking out a paper.]*  
By LORD NORTHAMPTON recommended to us,  
Just ere the Council met?—Why turn aside?



ROCHESTER. [*Afide.*]

The summary of all my hopes and fears!—

KING.

The LADY ESSEX would engross you all—

Nay, nay—cast off reserve—what says my ROBERT?

ROCHESTER.

To your great wisdom, humbly, I submit;

You rais'd me up, and made me what I am,

In rank and fortune—amply blest'd in both—

'Till ESSEX' charms—yet—spare the blushing tale!

That paper—

KING.

Pléads well the amorous cause;

And if the allegations can be prov'd,

Or royal favour gloss the matter o'er;

What injury to NATURE, LOVE and BEAUTY,

To hold the trial off!—ourselves will speed it—

ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER.

O boundless joy, and favour undeserv'd!

KING.

Come then, your joy complete! and instant prove,  
From both commissions, our excess of love! [Exeunt.

SCENE. *The Countess, Northampton.*

NORTHAMPTON.

With kindred fondness, and Ambition's zeal,  
I caught each whisper'd sound; and heard, distinct,  
The slander of your fame—

COUNTESS.

Rage and revenge!  
Audacious Pedant! to arraign my virtue!—  
Now, my dear Uncle! by each tie you're bound,  
\* "To vindicate the honour of our House,"  
Thro' me, a sufferer by his foul reproach!

NORTHAMPTON.

\* The literal words of History.

## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

NORTHAMPTON.

The insult wounds us deep—

COUNTESS.

Too-patient ROCHESTER

Participates in guilt, who could endure

The tale of violation—

NORTHAMPTON.

Own'd he the charge?

COUNTESS.

Long paus'd he on the truth, from stubborn Friendship!

Thence more suspicious, with Love's keen reproach,

I wrung the unwilling secret from his heart!—

But, say! must I revenge, or brook the insult?

NORTHAMPTON.

I'm hearted in your cause—

COUNTESS.



COUNTESS.

If you aspire  
To wealth, or greatness, at the hand of ROCHESTER—

NORTHAMPTON.

No more—I'm wholly your's—nay, even the EARL—

COUNTESS.

Yes! he shall do me right—or, ere this heart—  
But see! he comes!—this instant proves his truth—

*Enter ROCHESTER.*

ROCHESTER. [*As he enters.*

Joy to my COUNTESS, to my Friend, NORTHAMPTON!  
Joy to my Bride!—such may I deem you now,  
Since my all-bounteous Lord!—Ha! wherefore turn,  
And cloud your beauties with untimely grief!

COUNTESS.

My injur'd HONOUR calls for floods of tears—

SIR THOMAS—Oh!

[*Weeps.*

ROCHESTER..

## ROCHESTER.

Waste not a thought on him,  
 Precluded from the pow'r of least offence !  
 Immediately sent forth to distant realms,  
 Ambassador to RUSSIA—

## COUNTESS.

How ! requite  
 His daring insult with exalted honour !  
 Send him to spread our fame in parts remote ;  
 Where, absent, ev'ry scandal may gain credit,  
 'Till, travelling hitherward with foul increase,  
 The nations wide re-echo our dispraise !  
 Do you call this revenge ?—Better keep him,  
 First in your heart, and closest at your ear !  
 That, SERPENT-like, he may infuse my shame ;  
 Teach you to break your vows, and set me up,  
 The mark of SCORN, and MAN's Ingratitude !—  
 Distraction's in the thought !—

[Weeps.]

NORTHAMPTON.

NORTHAMPTON.

Yet be compos'd!

[*Soothing her.*]ROCHESTER. [*Aside.*]

O rash offence to FRIENDSHIP, seen too late!  
 Yet all-prevailing Beauty!—Why did NATURE  
 Give to the Fair this eloquence of tears!  
 They conquer—they unman me!—Yet, my Friend—

COUNTESS.

Ay! there's the pause!—O thou false Lord!  
 Hence to this ruling Minion of your heart!  
 Fall on his neck—commend his *honest* zeal!  
 And, in the bounty of your *great* forgiveness,  
 Forswear your plighted vows, your Love—and me!—  
 Hence—and farewell!—for ever!

[*Going.*]

ROCHESTER.

Yet hear me!

NORTHAMPTON. [*Aside to her.*]

That you must grant, or all our views are cross'd!

R

ROCHESTER,



ROCHESTER.

Thou first, supreme attention of my thoughts!  
Believe my truth!—You shall be satisfied!

Yet—pity his offence—

COUNTRESS.

Still do you doubt—

ROCHESTER.

No—no—my soul but ruminates the means—

NORTHAMPTON.

This instant gives it—thus it cannot fail!  
Have you inform'd him of this sudden Honour?

ROCHESTER.

Not yet—but sent to order his attendance.

NORTHAMPTON.

With promis'd service, 'bove this stinted grace,  
Make him decline the offer!—

COUNTRESS.

Say, what follows?

NORTH-

## NORTHAMPTON.

The KING, incens'd at the imagin'd breach  
Of his Prerogative, so highly priz'd,  
Forthwith commits him Prisoner to the Tower—

COUNTESS. [*Aside.*

Thence ere he 'scape, REPENTANCE quits his crime!

*Enter a Servant.*

Servant,

My Lord! SIR THOMAS—

ROCHESTER.

Let him wait my coming.

[*Exit Servant.*

Say!—Does this scheme acquit your wrongs, and me?

COUNTESS.

It flatters much—

NORTHAMPTON.

Trust me with its success!—

R 2

ROCHESTER.

ROCHESTER.

Rely on both; so to the work of Joy,  
 And hasten the divorce!—and thou, kind Lord!  
 My Agent sole in OVERBURY'S stead,  
 Be Proxy for my truth!—adieu—he waits!

[*Exeunt COUNTESS and NORTHAMPTON.*]

SCENE. ROCHESTER.

How, in this mass of flesh, does CONSCIENCE droop!  
 While LOVE'S prevailing byass flees to goal,  
 And each opposing Passion sinks beneath it!—  
 So FRIENDSHIP yields apace—and so SIR THOMAS!—  
 But short confinement quits the debt of HATE,  
 And TIME subdues her wrath—It must be so!—  
 Whate'er the cast, LOVE must the hazard bide,  
 And all acquit me, who his pow'r have tried!



ROCHESTER.

R 2



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## A C T III.

### SCENE I. *The Palace.*

*The KING; an Attendant. [An open letter in the  
King's hand.]*

KING.

**H**ENCE to LORD ROCHESTER! We lack his presence!

*[Exit Attend.]*

What is Prerogative, or Right Divine,  
If ev'ry Subject dares at its controul?—  
Must kingly patience crouch, as in the toil,  
Slave to each Minion's will? Must Monarchy  
Descend so vilely low, to supplicate  
The Vassal's duty, in his Country's cause?  
First would We hurl the sceptre from our hand,  
Ere We'd degrade that pow'r, thro' life enjoy'd,  
To send a prouder Wight on public service!—

Well

Well does the ROMAN proverb bid "*confine*  
 "*Each in his proper sphere!*" Here, double Traytor!  
 Not only scorn our honour, but assert,  
 That ROCHESTER—the Parent of his State—  
 Will answer his refusal—his own words  
 Shall judge him, and condemn—

*[Musics over the letter as ROCHESTER enters.]*

S C E N E.     *The KING, ROCHESTER.*

ROCHESTER.     *[Unobserved by the King.]*

What joy, my Liege!

What thanks for the Divorce—*[But soft! he starts!—*  
 The Letter works—O GRIEF!—must I inflame it—  
 Even so—or on the dawning of my hopes,  
 The SUN of Bliss descends!     *[Aside.*

*To the KING.]* Why starts my Liege!

KING.

Ha! ROCHESTER! Mark here the Subject's scorn—  
 Nay, his presumption, to associate you

In

In treasonable guilt—These bold contents

Peruse, and judge yourself— [Gives the Letter.

[ROCHESTER trembles, as he reads.

See, how amaz'd!

He trembles at the baseness of his Friend!—

For well he lov'd him, and his fondness prov'd— [Aside.

ROCHESTER. [Aside.]

O FRIENDSHIP! LOVE!—how dreadful is the conflict!

KING.

[Still is he mov'd, and turns aside, to wave

The subject he condemns—too-tender Heart!] [Aside.

Nay, tremble not, but speak! give Anguish words,

To blunt the secret sting!—speak, as Ourselves!

ROCHESTER.

Fain would I, gracious Liege! from fond remembrance

Of what SIR THOMAS was—what once I knew him—

Devise some palliative—but—

KING.



KING.

Too-gentle Lord!

I see your Friendship struggles with the Truth,  
That falters on your tongue!—but these, more bright,  
Flash full conviction on him!

ROCHESTER.

Well my Liege

Knows, he has shar'd the secrets of my heart—  
[Love, cancel now that thought! [*Afide*] How far, indeed,  
This confidence might tempt him to suspect,  
I still requir'd his aid, and thence—

KING.

O ROBERT!

Check thy good-nature with this well-known truth!  
This confidence, this insolence of thought,  
Has lost the State its ablest Ministers!—  
Let but this proud opinion of himself  
Possess the weakest Thinker of 'em all;  
Strait he assumes a consequential air,

And

And foars aloft 'bove us and MAJESTY !  
 It must not be endur'd—let him appear !—  
 We will confront him, with the double breach  
 Of LOYALTY and FRIENDSHIP !

ROCHESTER.

[So all were lost ! [ *Aside.*

No—my kind Liege !—if my opinion sways—  
 Better unheard to punish, nor admit  
 The clamour of this selfish arrogance !  
 Think, what rash arguments th'accus'd will bring,  
 From MAGNA CHARTA, and prescription past,  
 In plea, and sanction for their privilege,  
 Their liberty of person, as of thought !

KING.

How like the Politician of our hand !

ROCHESTER.

Nay, worse—will blow SEDITION's noisy trump,  
 High in the tainted air !—soon TUMULT spreads,

s

ROCHESTER.

60 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

'Till innocent, with guilty, are involv'd  
In calumny and danger—witness RALEIGH !

KING.

That single case bespeaks necessity  
Of vigorous opposition to their Pride !—  
Already have these tumults spread too far ;  
But we'll avoid, and check their rage at distance !  
Who waits——

*Enter an Officer.*

Bear hence our high commands, and let  
SIR THOMAS OVERBURY be committed,  
A prisoner to the Tower—see it done ! [*Exit Off.*

This contumacious spirit fully tam'd,  
Regard to your known friendship may enlarge him !

ROCHESTER. [*Afide.*

Soon as her wrath's aton'd !—

KING.

Come—CARE, avaunt !

I sicken at the theme—how speeds Divorce ?

ROCHESTER.



ROCHESTER.

Our victory I hasted to impart,  
 'Till silenc'd by this trouble and offence !—  
 All is complete ; my Royal Master's love,  
 ESSEX' submission, and great NATURE's right,  
 Soon perfected our wish, which only waits  
 Your HIGHNESS' favour, to confirm in marriage—

KING.

The bus'ness likes us well—then instant light  
 The bridal lamp, and summon all your Friends !  
 Ourself, in state, will give her to your love,  
 And with her, large increase of wealth and honour—  
 —No thanks ! but see it done ! while We prepare  
 Our Royal Consort to partake the joy ! *[Exit.]*

ROCHESTER. *[Alone.]*

But for this sigh of FRIENDSHIP at my heart,  
 I were exalted o'er Humanity,  
 By LOVE, as favour !—now, the first secur'd ;

In OVERBURY's cause I'll so prevail,  
He soon shall be enlarg'd, if not replac'd !  
And thus resolv'd, I'll greet the coming BLISS ! [Exit.

S C E N E, *The Tower.*

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

O RALEIGH ! how thy fate still presses on me !—  
Close Prisoner in the Tower !—Could ROCHESTER,  
For my too-faithful counsel act deceit,  
And guilefully seduce me to my ruin !—  
Fain would I hope, his honour far surmounts  
Such courtly, cruel arts—fashion'd to Truth,  
Nor giving precedent for such suspicion !  
Perhaps, by some important cause delay'd,  
The KING, for his Prerogative alarm'd,—  
Which, well I know, he prizes 'bove his crown—  
Has sentenc'd me unheard—if so, my Friend  
Will break the jealous cloud, and set me free !

Such

Such his great Pow'r and Love!—but, truce with doubt—  
Here the dark riddle's solv'd——

*Enter Sir WILLIAM CADE.*

OVERBURY.

O good Lieutenant!

Saw you Lord ROCHESTER?

SIR WILLIAM.

With Friendship's zeal,

I fought admittance long—but all in vain!—

OVERBURY.

Said you, you came from me?

SIR WILLIAM.

I did—nay, told,

'Twas urgent business—but not one would bear

My errand to their Lord!—

OVERBURY.

Not so, Sir WILLIAM!

Serv'd



Serv'd I them once!---But 'tis still thus---  
 When rising, how they cringe, and court your service!—  
 Let but your smallest difference with their Lord  
 Slacken the cement of self-founded love;  
 Down sinks their rotten flattery, and zeal,  
 Like a loose fabrick, tumbling to its base!  
 Forth on the ruins spring the selfish tribe,  
 Contending each the merit to depress you;  
 As—like the PHOENIX—from your ashes sprung  
 To light and life, they gloried in your fall!  
 Oh! 'tis their NATURE's vice!--and thence, it seems,  
 They knew of my distress—

SIR WILLIAM.

No care appear'd,  
 Obtrusive, to disturb the general joy  
 At the approaching nuptials—

OVERBURY.

Nuptials—of whom?

SIR

SIR WILLIAM.

Of ROCHESTER with ESSEX' Wife divorc'd—

OVERBURY. *[Starts.]*

Of ROCHESTER with ESSEX!—Now it dawns,  
And opes the horrid vision to my view!  
Yes, my old Friend! at such glad times as these,  
Sorrow must wait fit leisure to be heard!  
But who comes here?

*Enter Sir JERVIS ELLIS, WESTON following. ELLIS gives  
a paper to CADE, who reads, and starts.*

OVERBURY.

Ha! his surprise  
Some new alarm forebodes—

SIR WILLIAM.

Not very new!  
'Tis only my discharge—

*[Giving Sir Thomas the paper.]*

OVERBURY.

## OVERBURY.

How! CADE dismiss'd!

But worse here follows, in the strict command, [Reads.

I be debarr'd all visitance of Friends!

[Oh, that the gathering storm would burst betimes,  
And crush my greater fears! [Aside.

ELLIS. [To Sir WILLIAM.

My orders are,

That you retire forthwith!

SIR WILLIAM.

Sir, I obey!—

Adieu, SIR THOMAS!

OVERBURY. [Embraces him.

My ancient Friend, farewell!

You bear the Court-reward of honest service—

[My thanks are yet to come! *Aside.*] Again, farewell!

[Weeps as Sir WILLIAM goes out.

ELLIS



ELLIS.

As I'm commanded to keep Strangers hence,  
Let me present this faithful Servant to you !

[Presents WESTON.

OVERBURY.

I do submit—[howe'er his looks offend,  
Distress no choice allows!—*Aside.*] But, prithee, leave me,  
That I may reconcile my anguish'd thoughts,  
To meet the worst of fate— [They bow, and exeunt.

SCENE, OVERBURY alone.

OVERBURY.

How just th' alarm,  
When FAITH betrays to ruin, FRIENDSHIP yields  
To female machination!—If 'tis thus—  
Bethink, SEDUCTRESS, and misguided LORD !  
How short-liv'd is the glare of fancied joys,  
That seem to shine upon you!—whose attainment,

T

Purchas'd

68 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

Purchas'd by foul DISHONOUR, melts away,  
 And sinks, like dross before the proving blaze,  
 As tranſient, as impure—founded on VICE,  
 Weak is their baſis, great will be their fall ;  
 And, if I err not, ſudden !—Yet, good HEAVEN !  
 Accept my innocence, and truth approv'd !  
 And now—my laſt ſad choice, and remedy—  
 To ROCHESTER I'll write my fulleſt griefs !  
 Some ANGEL waſt my ſorrows to his ear,  
 And pious FRIENDSHIP ſooth him to redrefs !

[Goes in. Scene cloſes.]

SCENE, *The Banqueting-Room.*

*The KING leads in the QUEEN.*

KING.

“ Learn to be wiſe,” my QUEEN ! nor diſapprove  
 Our conduct, and regard for ROCHESTER !  
 Aſſur'd, no future Favorite, to our heart,

Admittance

Admittance gain, but of thy free commending—  
So let my QUEEN indulge our present choice!

[Returns in.

QUEEN alone.

New Politics! whereby his Grace, to me,  
The blame of future Minions would transfer!  
Thus gloss his violence of Love misplac'd,  
And ROCHESTER's disdain!—But soft—they come!

*Enter the KING, banding in the COUNTESS, now Lady  
ROCHESTER; ROCHESTER, NORTHAMPTON, BEDFORD,  
ABBOT, WINWOOD, Guards, and Attendants. The  
KING, QUEEN, &c. take their seats.*

KING.

Thus LIFE, in jocund mood, with nimble pace,  
Lightly trips forward; and grey-bearded TIME  
Seems to forget his function, and his years,  
Grown young in our delights!—Thus 'tis to reign!

T 2

Let



Let others boast of carnage, and of war ;  
 PEACE be our Herald, and with joys, like this,  
 Encircle still our throne !—Know, my kind Love !  
 And ye, attentive PEERS ! this day is ROCHESTER's !—  
 Not by that name, but EARL OF SOMERSET !  
 To which high title, join the rich estate  
 Of \*WESTMORLAND deceas'd—so shall the Bride,  
 In nothing, lack her former dignity !  
 The King salutes the EARL and COUNTESS SOMERSET !

[*Bows to them.*]

WINWOOD. [*Aside.*]

Where will this end !

KING.

\* This agrees with the account of several HISTORIANS : but some dissent from them, and state the fact thus—

' The considerable Estate of SHERBURN had been secur'd to his  
 ' family, (SIR WALTER RALEIGH's) by a former Conveyance to  
 ' his Son. The omission of a word in the Deed of Conveyance,  
 ' made a flaw in young RALEIGH's title. This flaw reverted the  
 ' forfeited lands to the Crown. The rapacious SOMERSET was  
 ' inform'd of it, and begged them for himself. RALEIGH's Wife  
 ' petition'd JAMES on the occasion. His answer was—" I mun ha'  
 ' the lands ; I mun ha' the lands for CARRE."

KING.

And first, my gracious ANNE!  
Receive them to your favour!

QUEEN. [*Rises, and courtesies.*

In complaisance,  
Greet We their sudden honours!—[Strain'd accord! [*Aside.*

KING.

All hail the Favorite of your Monarch's love!—

ABBOT.

[*Aside, while they salute SOMERSET, &c.*

This incense is too much—it must consume him!

SOMERSET.

[*Leads the COUNTESS to the Throne.*

Permit us, gracious Liege! where language fails,  
To pour the overflowing of our hearts,  
In rapture, at the foot of MAJESTY,

So

72 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

So bounteous, so benign!—and O descend,  
 Thou white-robed, spotless maid, fair FAITH yclep'd!  
 To perfect here thy symbol; that my Liege,  
 His feudal hand within his Servant's twined,  
 Confirm his royal favour ours for ever—

KING. [*Gives his hand to Somerset.*  
 Accept this sacred pledge of sure regard!

BEDFORD. [*Aside.*  
 That GORDIAN knot may be dissever'd yet!—

COUNTESS.  
 Could I, my bounteous Lord! expression find,  
 To answer my ideas—

KING.  
 Nay, nay! go to!  
 Thro' those bright eyes, your heart's acknowledgment  
 Out-runs your tongue—I see it clearer there,  
 In dress more gaudy, than of ELOQUENCE!—

Thence



Thence, did our means keep pace with our desire,  
 With like munificence this day were crown'd,  
 As the late nuptials of our much-lov'd Child!—  
 But see, the Ruler of our Capital!

*Enter the LORD-MAYOR in his Robes, ALDERMEN, &c.*

KING.

What would the abstract of our Majesty?

LORD MAYOR.

First to our Sovereign, and his Royal Consort,  
 With all respect, our loves we do commend!  
 Next, to this noble Lord—whose honest service  
 Has profited the State beyond our speakings—  
 And to his beauteous Bride, we do present  
 Ours and our City's greetings!—Furthermore;  
 We do beseech your MAJESTIES, and them,  
 To grace our humble banquet, and our sports,  
 In honour to the present happy nuptials!

KING.

ABBOT.

ABBOT.

*[Aside, while the KING, &c. receive  
the LORD MAYOR, &c.]*

There spoke th'appendages, that hang on FORTUNE,  
And tag the Favorite's honours!—precious tools!

KING.

Bear hence, my Lord, our thanks!—and as our heart  
Accords in PLEASURE's note; We do accept  
This greeting of their loves!—

SOMERSET.

Our speech, kind Lord!  
Swell'd to the highest strain of utterance,  
Too faintly sounds our gratitude, and praise!

LORD MAYOR.

These gracious answers, pleas'd, I shall return  
To our glad City's ears—with thanks profound,  
Humbly we take our leaves—

KING.

KING.

See, Lieutenant !

That all due honours wait them—

[*LORD MAYOR, &c. go out.*

—And let us

Prepare to welcome this new scene of Joy ! [*Descends,*

COUNTRESS ! your hand—it is your BRIDESMAN's right—

Still may he lead you to more rich delight !

[*Hands out the COUNTRESS ; ABBOT  
leads the QUEEN ; and exeunt.*

S C E N E, BEDFORD, WINWOOD.

WINWOOD.

The Prelate plies her hard—this way he leads her—

LORD ESSEX too, on vengeance wholly bent,

Through me, receiv'd her MAJESTY's permission

To lay his wrongs before her—

U

BEDFORD.



BEDFORD.

JUSTICE grant

The means to intercept, and wound his Pride!

WINWOOD.

Fear not!—they come!—and ESSEX waits without;  
 I'll forthwith bring him to her MAJESTY—  
 Retire!—give ABBOT leifure for perfuafion!—

*[They retire.]**Enter the* QUEEN, ABBOT.

QUEEN.

Yes, holy PRÆLATE! his o'er-weening Pride,  
 As the fierce Lightning's blast, falls down alike  
 On all beneath, regardless of the object—  
 Nor place, nor birth, affords security.

ABBOT.

Had I not mark'd its blind, resistless rage  
 Burst ev'n on MAJESTY; I had not thus

Presum'd,

Prefum'd, my Royal Mistress to entreat!—  
 If such his scorn, before the perjur'd act  
 Of this adulterous match; before this step,  
 His partial Lord has added to his Pride;  
 What have we now to fear?

QUEEN.

True, good ABBOT!

But a more potent cause my soul alarms,  
 With horror at his name—SUSPICION casts  
 Her side-long glance upon him, as concern'd  
 In my dear HENRY's death!—

ABBOT.

So RUMOUR speaks—

But TRUTH affirms, that not ev'n show of grief,  
 At an event so honestly bewail'd,  
 Obscur'd his brow—his joy was manifest—

QUEEN.

Painful remembrance! yet it greets you now,

With the avowal of my perfect hate !  
 Audacious Traytor ! openly rejoice,  
 To see the first, the fairest of my flock,  
 Torn from his People's love !—Yes, ABBOT, yes !  
 He was the pride of all, his Mother most ;  
 And since SUSPICION cast her glance that way,  
 His fight is deadly to me—

ABBOT.

Mildness best

Befits our garb and office—thence, great QUEEN !  
 I wish but to supplant him ; so to curb  
 That power, which drives him blindly on offences,  
 Injurious to our sacred character !—  
 But see ! more injur'd Lords !—and at their head,  
 The public mark of Perjury and Scorn,  
 The much-abused ESSEX !—

QUEEN.

The Royal love

To



To this exalted Minion doth require  
 Our closest circumspection—tell them then,  
 With caution to attend at our Apartment ;  
 Where we will hear their wrongs—perhaps redress! [*Exit.*

*Enter, on the opposite side, ESSEX, BEDFORD, WINWOOD.*

ABBOT.

Now is your time—Her MAJESTY's prepar'd  
 To give you audience—follow then her steps  
 At humble distance ; but beware the KING!  
 So prosper in your cause—farewell! [*Exit.*

ESSEX.

Adieu!

Now JUSTICE fway, and VENGEANCE is secur'd!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE,

80 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

SCENE, NORTHAMPTON, *The* COUNTESS, WESTON  
*waits behind.*

NORTHAMPTON.

We must be brief—the KING's of fickle mold,  
And may as suddenly enlarge SIR THOMAS,  
As wantonly confine him—

COUNTESS.

We've more to fear  
From SOMERSET, whose conscience would rebel,  
And give him liberty—

NORTHAMPTON.

That once procur'd,  
Adieu my interest!—mine—a toy to yours,  
A nothing, to your loss irreparable  
Of LOVE, FAME, HONOUR—

COUNTESS.

Hold! and perish first  
The race entire of meddling Sycophants!

NORTH-

NORTHAMPTON.

Look back awhile ! See these the sure effects  
 Of OVERBURY fav'd !—Too well he knows  
 The beaten course to SOMERSET's regard—  
 Will steer, full-winded, to his former port,  
 There stop the current of your happiness !  
 With hotter spleen arraign your conduct past,  
 And counteract our schemes—and should he blaze—  
 As sure he will—his sufferings to the world,  
 Disgrace and ruin—

COUNTESS.

Ha ! that thought brings DEATH—  
 Am I so weak, who felt the Lion's fangs,  
 To free him from his toils, and trust his mercy ?

NORTHAMPTON.

Our life, our own security's at stake—

COUNTESS.

'Tis NATURE's principle, and must be heard—

NORTH-



## THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

NORTHAMPTON.

DEATH only now confirms it—Tell us, WESTON!  
How operates your kindness to revenge?

WESTON.

Far as our caution suffer'd, has been done—  
Tho' yet his constitution shames our art!

NORTHAMPTON.

But his doom's seal'd—Come you, and FRANKLIN then,  
Forthwith to my apartment. [If this night  
Our consultation fails, he may henceforth  
The phyfic and Physician both defy! *Aside.*]  
See you attend—

WESTON.

We shall, my bounteous Lord!

NORTHAMPTON.

And once this hated barrier remov'd,  
No interruption hangs upon our course!—  
Fly, WESTON! to ensure the rich reward!

*Exit WESTON.*

[She seems to pause—left she relapse—'tis done!

Else mine were all the danger, and the blame!

*[Aside, and exit.]*

SCENE, *The COUNTESS, alone.*

COUNTESS.

Ha! is he gone; and left me on the rack  
Of doubts, of fears, and wild perplexity!  
—Yet this is false compunction; would obstruct  
NATURE's primæval law, great Self-defence!  
Here would disturb my FORTUNE, LOVE, and FAME,  
Secur'd by his remove!—Yes, meddling Wretch!  
Justly you fall, a lesson to your race,  
To guard their busy speech from female blame!  
While I, the boast and chronicle of tongues,  
The Maidens' tributary praise receive,  
For justice done our Sex!—Hence, MAN! beware,  
How you arraign the honour of the FAIR!



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## A C T IV.

### S C E N E I. *The Tower.*

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY, *in a Night-gown, seated on a Couch; a Table and Lamp; an open Letter on the Table.* SIR JERVIS ELLIS *waiting at a distance.*

OVERBURY.

O NATURE! NATURE! just are all thy ways!

Yet, oh! indulge the sad, life-lab'ring wretch,

To question with his pangs!—Here—bitter scroll!

*[Taking up the Letter.*

He writes—"The KING's too busy to be mov'd—

"So anger'd, 'twere unsafe to urge my suit,

"For a few days to come; and then"—Oh, then,

Vain all thy pleadings 'gainst MORTALITY!—

But



But who incens'd the KING?—O ROCHESTER!  
 Thy sad delusion, and my Fate's reveal'd!—  
 Yet—why not plunge the dagger in my heart,  
 Not rack me in disguise? O cruelty!—  
 But here my torments cease—and—prais'd be MERCY!—  
 Few moments ope the portal of ETERNITY,  
 And shut out persecution!—Then my soul,  
 From this sad prison free'd, this tortur'd flesh,  
 Shall seek those peaceful mansions, where no more  
 The COUNTESS wreaks revenge!—where, ROCHESTER!  
 DECEIT no harbour finds—nor GUILT's conceal'd!—  
 Yet not for me thy lasting punishment!—  
 Fain would I die in hope, that artful LOVE  
 Seduc'd thee to my ruin—'Tis fulfill'd!—

Draw near, SIR JERVIS! Oh!—DEATH grips me hard!  
 His bus'ness done—haste thee to ROCHESTER!—  
 Declare my faith unspotted—that my lips  
 Clos'd in forgiveness of him—pray him—JERVIS!—  
 Pray him—to think—of OVERBURY's sufferings—

And thinking—to repent—for, oh!—how transient—  
Are human joys—and all this world is—Oh!

[Dies. *The Scene closes.*

S C E N E *changes to* SOMERSET'S.

SOMERSET.

[*An open Letter in his hand.*

Vain all the trappings of external pomp,  
With wretchedness within!—Not BEAUTY'S charms  
Their wonted solace give, when they would bind  
Their passive Victim in ignoble chains!—  
When they would tyrannize, and hold their triumph  
From FRIENDSHIP'S hallow'd use!—O most rash act!  
Why did I yield me to the magic voice  
Of all-persuading LOVE!—or why should BEAUTY,  
The outward grace of ANGEL-excellence,  
Lure Man to his destruction, SYREN-like,  
And darken REASON to the light of TRUTH!—

Now

Now late it flashes on me!—not too late,  
To hear its sacred call, and fly to—Ha!

[*Starts, seeing the* COUNTESS.

The COUNTESS here!—still she pursues my steps,  
And with resistless Eloquence of LOVE,  
Or conquers, or defers, my best resolves!—  
But now the conflict's past— [Muses over the Letter.

SCENE, SOMERSET, *The* COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Wherefore, my Lord!  
This sudden anguish, this self-imag'd grief,  
That hurries you from PLEASURE's gilded scene,  
And LOVE's encircling arms?

SOMERSET. [*Not regarding her.*

Yes! I will save him!—  
How, on reflection, does this bitter scroll  
Fill me with anguish, horror, and remorse!

COUNTESS.



COUNTESS.

Why shun me thus, as loathsome and abhorr'd?  
O wretched state of Womanhood! to live  
The constant mark for MAN's dissimulation!  
Was it for this, I leap'd the niggard bounds  
Of strict-eyed Prudence!—Was it for this,  
I tore me from a Husband's eager grasp!  
That 'scaping SCYLLA, I might sink more deep  
In fell CHARYBDIS' gulph!—O MAN! MAN! MAN!

[Weeps.]

SOMERSET.

These taunts rebuke my Love!—yet, oh, my Friend!

COUNTESS.

Still he's the cause—for him you would forget,  
So soon forget the now full-blooming charms  
Of LOVE and GREATNESS! Joys, he had with-held,  
And his remove secures!—fade these for him,  
And wither in their blossoms' fullest pride!—

Yes!

Yes! Marriage cancell'd all; and made me thus,  
The flighted victim of too-easy conquest!— [*Weeps.*

SOMERSET.

[These tears unman me!—I must yield awhile! [*Aside.*  
O mock me not!—your charms new vigour find,  
And ripen by possession—yet, my Friend!—

COUNTESS.

Have you forgot the insult to my Honour?

SOMERSET.

Oh, no!—but MERCY!—MERCY!—

COUNTESS. [*Starts, and speaks aside.*

With what awe  
That sacred name appalls—yet now, I fear,  
Its charm affects too late!—

SOMERSET.

Think of MERCY  
Heaven's dearest, tenderest attribute to MAN!

Think

Think too, what large atonement he will make !  
 How, by repentance, he will purge his crime,  
 White as the SUMMER'S fleece, or WINTER'S snow—  
 Then sure you will relent—Nay ! here I swear ;  
 If he not pay his life with endless Virtue,  
 Let ten-fold Death hereafter be his portion—  
 'Tis MERCY'S voice——

COUNTESS. [*Afide, and musing.*

Again that dreadful sound !

SOMERSET.

She pauses—smiles—assents !—Soft PITY thus  
 Fore-runs her tongue's expression—yes ! she yields—  
 My Friend is fav'd, and SOMERSET is blest !—  
 O make me worthy such exalted grace,  
 While \*thus I share my transport—'tis too much :

[\**Embracing her.*

I'd sink beneath the sum—And now, my Friend—

[*Going—he starts back on WESTON'S entering.*

Good news, or none?—speak !

WESTON.



WESTON. [*Gives a Letter.*

This best will answer!

SOMERSET.

[*Trembling, as he opens it.*

I tremble on the rack!

COUNTRESS. [*To WESTON.*

Know you the purport?

WESTON.

Your Foe, SIR THOMAS, sleeps—

COUNTRESS. [*In great confusion.*

Thanks—WESTON!—Thanks!

[*Tho' ill my fears pronounce them. Aside.*]

SOMERSET. [*Drops the Letter.*

Distraction!

Horror, horror!

COUNTRESS.

[*Now bursts the Tempest's rage!—*

Y

Too

Too late to calm, I must endure the blast!— [*Afide.*

[*Then takes up the Letter.*

Mark, what my Uncle writes:—\*“ That Heaven was

pleas'd, [*\*Reads.*

“ In OVERBURY’S death, to mark its grace,

“ By cutting off that evil Minister,

“ Ere he had run the common course of Life”—

Why here is grace and comfort, should restrain

These coward tears, beneath a Woman’s shedding!

SOMERSET.

Gush, tears of blood!—TRUTH’S fairest mirror’s broke,  
The Pride of Knighthood, and the soul of Honour!

COUNTESS.

Say, did you not consent?

SOMERSET.

O cruel error!

There all the blame was mine—I only knew

His faith, his virtue—Thence I should have stood,

As a Colossus, firm!

COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Did I not yield  
To MERCY, when besought?

SOMERSET.

Too late, alas!  
I sued, and you were won!—DEATH was too quick!  
O swiftly-flowing TIME! put back this hour,  
And throw eternal ages from the glass!—  
He will not hear my pray'r! O OVERBURY!

[Weeps.]

*Enter* NORTHAMPTON.

SCENE, SOMERSET, COUNTESS, NORTHAMPTON,

WESTON.

NORTHAMPTON.

I see the Messenger outran my speed!—  
But wherefore droops my Lord?

COUNTESS.

Remorse and Fear—

NORTHAMPTON.



NORTHAMPTON.

What cause for smallest fear?—The keepers all  
 Are of our choice, and our securest friends ;  
 And they shall spread such rumours of his death,  
 As shall forbid SUSPICION to approach,  
 Or glance a look on us—

SOMERSET.

CONSCIENCE ! CONSCIENCE !

NORTHAMPTON.

Away with Conscience—'tis a toy at best—  
 Here 'twill but blaze detection!—shake it off!  
 And trust this bus'ness wholly to my care!

SOMERSET.

So be thou hence my bosom's Counsellor!

[*Embracing him.*]

SIR THOMAS once—but, oh!—

NORTHAMPTON.

No more of him!

Better withdraw awhile!—

SOMERSET.

SOMERSET. [*Afide.*

Yes; to the KING!

There I'll implore for pardon!

COUNTESS.

Pray, retire!

And Love shall harmonize your soul to rest!

SOMERSET.

O for the precious balm! [*Exit.*

SCENE, *The* COUNTESS, NORTHAMPTON, WESTON.

NORTHAMPTON.

Come hither, WESTON!

Fly to the TOWER—assemble all concern'd

In OVERBURY's death; and once again,

Swear an eternal silence!—then command

To inter the body in the Tower-Chapel,

Without the meanest form!—that done; report,

That dying of a loathsome, foul disease,

Your

96 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

Your lives requir'd; nay more; the public health  
Oblig'd you to commit him to the grave,  
As suddenly, as secret—this, good WESTON!  
Crowns all your labour, and infuses reward—

COUNTESS.

Riches, my WESTON! 'bove the MISER's wish,  
Or vulgar computation! [WESTON bows.

NORTHAMPTON.

No thanks—but fly  
To finish—to be paid!— [Exit WESTON.

NORTHAMPTON.

Now, my dear Niece!  
Our double triumph seems secure, and full,  
To INTEREST and LOVE's sublimest height—

COUNTESS.

Not while these qualms of SOMERSET—[nay, mine—  
[Aside.  
Impede their course, and clog the gay procession!

NORTHAMPTON.



NORTHAMPTON.

— These bode no solid ill—NECESSITY,  
And terror of CONVICTION, soon will rouse him  
From this lethargic grief—

COUNTESS.

But at this time, ]  
A look may give th'alarm, and ruin—

NORTHAMPTON.

Not fo;  
While, with the well-prov'd magic of your charms,  
You sooth each rising pang!—That part is yours—  
And mine to ascertain the full security  
Of Secrecy and Silence—Then—

COUNTESS.

O then,  
Welcome the tide of ever-flowing joys,  
That WEALTH and GREATNESS give! their charms expand  
My

98 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

My female heart, impatient to possess them,  
Free from the Slanderer's tongue, or qualms of Thought—

NORTHAMPTON.

Haste to secure the means—

COUNTESS.

And may success,  
Pure as my gratitude, attend your counsels!

*[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE, ESSEX, BEDFORD, WINWOOD.

ESSEX.

SIR THOMAS' virtues swell in ev'ry mouth,  
Which heightens the alarm at his confinement!—  
Yet it denotes unusual want of power,  
In the all-potent EARL; while we receive  
New-added strength from his imprisonment,  
Whose prudent Counsel often has withstood  
The measures of Revenge on SOMERSET.

WINWOOD,

WINWOOD.

Besides ; the people clamour, and bewail  
 SIR THOMAS' cruel fate ; while some suspect,  
 A more important cause, than that assign'd,  
 Has sway'd the KING, to strain Prerogative  
 Beyond the bounds of Royalty and Prudence !

BEDFORD.

All this but slowly forwarded our work,  
 Had VILLIERS not been found—

ESSEX.

Or found, not seen !—

That was the master-stroke of policy ;  
 And drole was the encounter !—You might see  
 Our Sovereign's colour spread with secret joy ;  
 Then was the pleasing tumult strait suppress'd,  
 Left SOMERSET surprise his struggling soul,  
 Distract with love and fear !—Sure never King,

Z

For



For Wisdom loud extoll'd, was so enslav'd  
By handsome forms, and pageantry of dress!

WINWOOD.

Already has this fickle fancy prov'd  
Ill-omen'd to the EARL—This rival now  
Enjoys the place of Cup-bearer; and those,  
Who late, in servile flattery, hug'd the EARL,  
Now secretly adore this rising star,  
That promises eclipse to SOMERSET!  
And from the well-known caprice of the KING,  
Soon sets his glory, if the QUEEN commend!

BEDFORD.

Doubt not, the smooth-tongued PRELATE will secure  
That necessary point—

ESSEX.

See, where they come,  
In consultation high!—Let us observe them—

*[They retire back.]*

*Enter*

*Enter the QUEEN, ABBOT.*

QUEEN.

Tho' just my hate, and to persuasion apt,  
Herein you overlook the sure event !  
For VILLIERS, or whoe'er my voice shall raise,  
His fondness turns to pride !—nay, he himself  
Will teach him to despise, and hard entreat us ;  
That his new Minion may seem all-beholden  
To him, and him alone !—

ABBOT.

But, Royal Mistress !  
VILLIERS can ne'er surmount the present height  
Of the self-will'd, aspiring SOMERSET !  
And for your fears—behold these potent Lords !  
Draw near, my Friends ! and, with one voice, remove  
All scruple from your Queen !—Swear, from this hour,  
That you'll assert her state and dignity,  
'Gainst any future insolence of VILLIERS !

*Essex, and the rest.*

We all engage to this—

ABBOT.

And lo—the KING!

Where opportune he comes—Now, injur'd QUEEN!

Avenge yourself, and do your People right!

*[Exeunt all, but the Queen.]*

*The QUEEN, alone.*

Their arguments, concurring with my wrongs,

Plead loudly in their cause—'Tis worth the hazard!—

But soft! the KING, 'rapt in unusual thought!—

I'll give him way, 'till he digest his spleen!

*[Retires.]*

*Enter the KING.*

KING.

Avaunt, ye faucy CARES! nor thus intrude

Upon a Monarch's peace!—VILLIERS and SOMERSET—

The



The conflict reaches here, and rends my heart!—  
Fickle—nay more; ungrateful were I deem'd,  
Should I declare for VILLIERS—Yet some charm,  
Like the CIRCEAN touch, enslaves my soul  
In willing thralldom; while the other palls,  
And sickens to my taste—Various the cause! \*  
'Mongst others, his new-fledg'd severity  
Would thwart Our fav'rite pleasures—Add to this;  
Detested AVARICE his bosom taints,  
And poisons all his actions!—Nay—still worse,  
His scorn, his proud repulse of gentle VILLIERS,  
Enkindle my disgust!—Yet there, my promise—  
Which but our QUEEN absolves—forbids to own  
The secret action of this kindling flame!—  
But she appears—I must beguile this tumult!—

\* This exact from History.

SCENE,

S C E N E, *The KING, and QUEEN.*

KING.

Welcome, my QUEEN! how fares it with our Love?

QUEEN.

Better were I, my Lord! but that your gloom—

KING.

Regard not that!—Thy cheering presence, Sweet!

As the SUN's beams upon the dew-dropt flowers,

Absorbs the weight of care!—

QUEEN.

In absence then,

Its pressure may return. Come, my dear Lord!

Hence with reserve; or let me judge the cause!

In the long train of PEACE, no foreign care

Presses between—this grief is nearer home—

Does SOMERSET—

KING.

KING.

I pray thee, not enquire—

QUEEN.

Or VILLIERS prove unworthy of his place?

KING.

Not so, in truth!—he grows in merit daily—

QUEEN.

So let him hence in favour—

KING. [*Aside.*

Be still my joy!

QUEEN.

For as the EARL's presuming gives offence;

Better divide the torrent of his power,

Than leave its course, unrivall'd, and uncheck'd,

To bear down all before it—

KING.



KING.

Indeed, of late,  
Ourself began to think so—

QUEEN.

Cherish the thought !  
And if young VILLIERS the more worthy prove,  
Take him at my commending !—ill it befits  
A QUEEN of ENGLAND, Child of distant realms,  
Thence unconversant with the Nation's state,  
To hold her Sov'reign in restrictive bonds,  
Against his People's weal, or inward peace !—

KING.

How sensible, how kind !—And yet, my LOVE !  
Art thou indeed sincere ?

QUEEN.

In right good truth !  
Only—might I advise—be more reserv'd !  
And mark, in SOMERSET, the latent danger,  
To raise, from humble state, a giddy youth,

In

In time to be a curb on MAJESTY,  
The bane of many, and perhaps his Country!

KING.

If fearful of me, take my promise back!—

QUEEN.

Not so, my Lord! Mistrust becomes Us not;  
Therefore DISCRETION be your sole restraint!—  
May ENGLAND's glory still direct your choice,  
So bless my Sovereign with his PEOPLE's voice!

[Exit.]

*The KING, alone.*

At Our discretion then, why let it be!  
Restraint be banish'd hence, the Vassal's curse,  
Unworthy tenant of a MONARCH's breast!  
And VILLIERS now—Ha! SOMERSET!—My fever  
Relapses at his sight!—I would avoid him—  
Now 'tis too late—DISSIMULATION cloak me!

A a

SCENE,

1108 THE EARL OF SOMERSET.

S C E N E, *The KING, SOMERSET.*

KING.

So, ROBERT ! why that thoughtful countenance ?

SOMERSET.

Thoughtful, my Liege ! Not so—[Down, fearful guilt !

*[Aside.*

KING.

Nay—nay ! go to !—[Can he distrust our change ?

*[Aside.*

SOMERSET. *[Aside.*

He seems Complacence all—Could I but speak !—

KING.

This distance seems suspicious of our love,

Unkind return for favour great as mine !

If otherwise, be free, and speak your thoughts !

Your Sovereign does command—

SOMERSET.



SOMERSET.

And SOMERSET,

The lowly Scyon, rais'd by princely care,  
The Pupil of your hand, thus kneels obedient—

[Kneels.]

KING.

What sudden humour!—Rise—I charge thee—rise,  
And let me know the cause!—

SOMERSET.

Most honour'd Lord!

Pardon that inward retrospect of Thought,  
Which casts a shade upon my zeal and love!—  
The page historic speaks in terrors here,  
And magnifies the dangers, that pursue  
The Fav'rite of the Throne!—What Minister,  
But, soon or late, has fall'n into the snare,  
Which public ENVY lays for his destruction!—  
In this extreme, where should th'oppressed run,

110 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

Where seek relief, but in his Sov'reign's arms,  
Who only can protect—can—

KING.

Whence this fear?

Has SOMERSET a foe, that is not Ours?

Who therefore shall presume?—

SOMERSET.

All-gracious Lord!

When the storm bursts, too late the remedy  
Is fought against distress—ere it gains strength,  
We should provide against its coming rage—  
And that my Prince alone— [Kneels, and weeps.

KING.

[I cannot bear

To see the edifice, Ourselves has rais'd,  
Thus humbled to the dust—*Aside.*]

Rise—Speak your wish!

What new assurance wouldst thou of our love?

SOMERSET.

SOMERSET.

Your gracious general pardon for the past—  
 That, should occasion want—[Down, busy fears! *Afide.*]  
 I may defy their splenetic assault—  
 O think upon your love, and plighted truth!

KING.

[They have prevail'd. *Afide.*] Why doubt of us so long?  
 Rise, and accept the amplest We can grant!—

SOMERSET.

These tears of gratitude! [*Rises, and clasps his hand.*]

KING.

See it drawn forthwith!  
 Let it the general tenor far surpass,  
 That it exceed, not rise from precedent!—  
 So teach the World, that what Our hand has rais'd,  
 No mortal shall depress—Live hence secure,  
 And scorn their idle rage—Farewell!

[*Going.*]

SOMERSET.



SOMERSET. [*Afide.*

Hold, heart!

Nor let thy rapture speak the guilty cause!

KING. [*Returns.*

[His tears have sooth'd me so, I'll grant him all—

*Afide.]*

See too, thy friend, SIR THOMAS, be releas'd—

[*Turns, as going out.*

SOMERSET. [*Afide.*

Be Guilt and Conscience still!—

KING. [*Returns.*

Yet, do not think,

I gave his freedom to the PEOPLE's clamour—

SOMERSET.

No, most kind Lord! [*All confused.*

[If he delays, I'm ruin'd!

*Afide.]*

KING.

KING.

Bring you the papers strait; and tell SIR THOMAS—  
Ha! what new alarm—

SOMERSET.

[What shall I say? *Aside.*]

This boundless—grace—its transport—choaks—

[*With great hesitation and confusion.*]

KING.

Kind soul!

His rapture overpower's him—I'll retire!

Nor, by my presence, swell his fond distress!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, SOMERSET, alone.

SOMERSET.

He's gone, and sav'd me from a full detection!

A moment more, my ruin were complete!—

O agony of CONSCIENCE, rack of Thought!—

But,

114 THE EARL OF SOMERSET.

But, in this ample Pardon, all is hush'd;  
 So may I hurl defiance at my foes,  
 At Majesty itself—and could I tear  
 SIR THOMAS from my thoughts; I'd challenge FATE,  
 And champion VILLIERS to th' unequal combat!—  
 There only am I mortal; there alone,  
 In my best-guarded State, will TRUTH assail,  
 And reach my Guilt-struck heart!—but on this balm  
 Of gracious pardon, and repentance true,  
 Will I repose my cure!—Kind MERCY! bear  
 The flattering HOPE, and mitigate DESPAIR!





THE EARL OF SOMERSET.  

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**A C T V.**

**\* S C E N E I.    *The Palace.***

*The KING, WINWOOD following.*

**KING.** [*To himself.*

**H**AVE We so long then nested in our heart  
A Wretch, that could his NATURE's stamp disgrace  
By such an act of horror!—Yet to sooth  
Our credulous ear to pardon!—O Royalty!  
How subject to the grossest imposition!  
But, if our Warrant be unfinish'd still,—  
Tho' that our Love had trebled its amount—  
My People shall have justice—

**B b**

**WINWOOD.**

\* This Scene is said to have actually passed at the KING's Palace, at ROYSTON; or, according to some HISTORIANS, at THEOBALDS.

116 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

WINWOOD. [*Aside.*]

If he hold to that—

KING.

Say, WINWOOD! are th' Associates of his guilt  
All apprehended?

WINWOOD.

All, that are nam'd, my Liege!

The EARL and COUNTESS SOMERSET except—

Whom, for especial purpose of your own,

'Till further orders you desir'd be free—

KING.

'Tis true. [My Love's remembrance pleaded there!

[*Aside.*]

But tell us, WINWOOD! and be more at large—

What further does SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL add,

Touching this hellish crime?

WINWOOD.

WINWOOD.

My Royal Lord!

At FLUSHING as your ENVOY chanc'd to stop,  
 Upon his way to BRUSSELS—there he learn'd,  
 That one, nam'd REEVE—a 'Pothecary's boy,  
 Who many poisonous doses had compounded—  
 On his sick bed, at DEATH's reproach appall'd,  
 The murd'rous scene disclos'd—on which, SIR WILLIAM  
 Examin'd REEVE himself; and from his lips  
 Th'account receiv'd, whereof he's special proof!

WINWOOD.

KING.

The Parricide! and now I recollect  
 His sudden starts of passion and alarm,  
 At OVERBURY'S name—which, at that time,  
 Our hasty fondness misinterpreted  
 Th'effusions of his honesty and love!—  
 These, with the pardon, witness to his guilt—

WINWOOD.

WINWOOD.



118 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

WINWOOD.

And yet to scorn your MAJESTY's command,  
To take young VILLIERS to his gracious favour!

KING.

Proud-hearted slave! that crowns his insolence!  
[Had he obey'd, Our love might have recurr'd,  
And wish'd him blameless—Now We are resolv'd!

[*Afide.*

Bore you our letters to SIR EDWARD COKE?

WINWOOD.

Most carefully, my Liege!

KING.

I have therein

Denounc'd HEAVEN's wrath on either, that should save  
Those legally convicted, and forego  
The ministry of JUSTICE—

WINWOOD.

WINWOOD.

Fear not COKE!

[He hates the Favourite much. *Aside.*] Already, SIRE!

The Warrant is prepar'd.—Even now the Officer  
Attends your royal pleasure—

KING.

Let him wait!

We must not suffer, that foul Murder sleeps,  
Unpunish'd, unreveng'd—No—my WINWOOD!  
'Tis finally resolv'd!—Draw near, and mark me!

[*They go out in conference.*]

*Enter SOMERSET on the opposite side.*

SOMERSET.

Oh, how each breeze the Guilt-struck soul appalls,  
How shakes him every gale!—The Aspen less  
Yields to the storm, and shivers with the blast!

Still

120 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

Still as I move, the deaf'ning RUMOUR spreads,  
 Swells on my ear, and awes with ev'ry sound!  
 Nay—as if HEAVEN my punishment fore-doom'd—  
 The CHANCELLOR presumptuous would not seal  
 The anchor of my Hope, the royal Pardon,  
 Which my KING's hand had sign'd—All-seeing JUSTICE!  
 But soon my LIEGE compels him to obey!  
 His Love's my proof against a host of foes,  
 Nor JUSTICE' self can reach me!—but—he's here!

*[The King appears with Winwood,  
 whom he dismisses at entrance.]*

SCENE, The KING, SOMERSET.

SOMERSET.

I came to take a short, unwilling leave  
 Of painful absence from my much-lov'd Lord!—  
 Yet ere I go, expos'd to SLANDER's shafts,  
 Will not my Liege assert Prerogative,  
 And punish EGERTON's\* unheard-of insolence,

His

\* The History of the first fourteen years of King JAMES says,  
 Lord ELSMORE was Chancellor: other Histories call him EGERTON.



His proud refusal to affix the seal,  
Where my KING's hand prescrib'd?—Audacious Man!

KING.

Has EGERTON refus'd?—[There JUSTICE stepp'd  
Between him and our love—*Afide.*

SOMERSET.

What says my King,  
To this affront of sacred Majesty?

KING.

What motive urg'd he for his strange refusal?—

SOMERSET.

Something he mutter'd of a *Premunire*;  
Then said, in scorn, “he'd answer to yourself”—

KING.

Then, be assur'd! Ourselves will have his answer!

SOMERSET.

[I can no more, lest he suspect the cause!—*Afide.*

On

122 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

On you, my Liege! and on your Love's remembrance,  
All confident I trust; so take my leave! [Going.

KING.

[So JUSTICE flips the mark—I must detain him.

[*Afide.*

Nay, prithee go not yet—and when thou dost,  
Delay not your return, as We intend  
“ Our Winter's progress to begin forthwith.”

SOMERSET.

My love, my gratitude, will wing my speed!

[Going.

KING.

[Why tarries WINWOOD? *Afide.*] Nay, I charge thee,  
haste

To renovate my pleasures with thy presence!

So bear this greeting with you!—

[*Embracing.*

*Enter*

*Enter WINWOOD behind, with an OFFICER.*

WINWOOD.

There is your Man—be bold, nor doubt the KING!

OFFICER.

*[Touches him on the Shoulder.*

Thou art my Prisoner!—

SOMERSET.

Ha! dar'ft thou, Slave!

Prefume to stop a Royal Favorite!—

Stand back, and tremble—

OFFICER.

From Lord Chief Justice COKE!

*[Shewing a Warrant.*

SOMERSET.

*[Terrific name!—*

*[Aside, and alarmed.*

Know, Wretch! himself,

C c

The



The proud SIR EDWARD, dare not, on his life,  
 Thus trespass 'gainst the KING's prerogative!—  
 Away! and tell this hot-brain'd Son of Law,  
 He dearly shall abide this wondrous breach  
 Of privilege—of freedom!—Hence—Begone!

OFFICER.

No blame on me, my Lord!

SOMERSET.

Prefuming slave!

Avaunt—or DEATH requites your arrogance!

*[Draws his Sword half out,  
 then recollecting himself.]*

*[Confusion—phrenzy—in the Royal presence!]*

*[Aside, in disorder.]*

KING.

[Ha! draw his sword before us!—Next, perhaps,  
 On Us he'd turn the point—I'll rid my fears! *[Aside.]*

Whence is this sudden clamour? *[Advances to them.]*

SOMERSET.

SOMERSET.

Haughty COKE

Not only grants his Warrant 'gainst our person;  
 But this vile tool of office here presumes,  
 Beneath your Royal roof, nay, in your presence,  
 To execute it on me.

KING. [*Feigning ignorance.*]

Say you, from COKE—

[*Takes the Warrant.*]

SOMERSET.

Can hallow'd Royalty brook such affront?

KING. [*Musing over the paper.*]

'Tis even from COKE—

SOMERSET.

Nor punish such unmeasur'd insolence?

KING. [*Still musing.*]

'Tis even from COKE—

SOMERSET.

SOMERSET.

[He heeds me not—His love  
Ponders 'twixt me and ruin—dire portent!— [*Aside.*  
Will not my Liege command this miscreant hence?

KING. [*Still musing.*

'Tis even from COKE!—Then you must needs obey—

SOMERSET. [*Aside.*

What do I hear!

KING.

Had this same COKE

Sent his *Mandamus* 'gainst our Royal self,  
We also must comply— [*Returning the paper, while—*

SOMERSET. [*Aside.*

Then all is lost—

My only fence destroy'd, the tide breaks in,  
And ruin spreads apace—With favour fled,  
Life follows on the wing!—Who shall, henceforth,  
Trust MAJESTY itself, or sacred hold  
The breath of greatest KINGS! O misery!

OFFICER.



OFFICER.

My Lord, I dare not stay—

SOMERSET.

Begone, avoid me!

Will not my Liege? [O anguish and despair! *Aside.*]

KING.

[I must divert him hence. *Aside.*]

In vain you ask,

What not Our love can grant—I judge not law—

And, as I deem this but th'effect of SLANDER,

The public Tax on Royal Favorites;

Better confute the charge—That ordeal paid,

You will return more sterling from the test!—

So fare thee well—and hasten to Our presence!

SOMERSET.

Fain would I speak—Confusion and Despair

Arrest my speech; nor can I say—Farewell!

[Exit, followed by Winwood and the Officer.

The

128 THE EARL OF SOMERSET.

SCENE, *The KING, alone.*

\* “ Why get thee hence, for I will neere again  
 “ That hated face behold”—but VILLIERS now  
 Be all in all!—He must be sooth'd to tryal,  
 Left his contemptuous carriage should reflect  
 On Us, and Our affections so misplac'd!—  
 That be SIR EDWARD'S charge—I'll write forthwith—  
 Then to young VILLIERS all my cares remove;  
 May he more worthy, and more grateful, prove!

*[Exit.*

SCENE, ESSEX, BEDFORD, WINWOOD.

ESSEX.

VENGEANCE has now a nobler name assum'd,  
 And wears the face of JUSTICE—Should the proofs  
 Accord with loud report; instant the fall  
 Of PRIDE and SOMERSET—

WINWOOD.

\* The express words of History.

WINWOOD.

The facts so clear

Small confirmation need—Beside; the KING

Has given orders for their speedy tryal!

BEDFORD.

All that remains, on our part, is to urge

Our gracious QUEEN, to intercept his love!

Left it recoil, and take its usual bias,

And so pervert, or stop the course of JUSTICE!

ESSEX.

Mark how, through her, in EGERTON's refusal,

The all-disposing hand of PROVIDENCE

Is plain out-stretch'd, between the secret crime;

And Royal condonation—

WINWOOD.

'Tis VIRTUE's hand!

Then break we off delay, and to the QUEEN!

ESSEX.



Essex. W.

Come on! Her interest makes JUSTICE sure!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE, *The Tower.*The COUNTESS. *A Table, Books, &c.*

COUNTESS.

These sacred Legends, and terrific walls,  
Awake my Guilt's remembrance, and incite  
To use the saving hour, which MERCY grants,  
In anguish and contrition! Shall I then  
Reject the sacred call of PENITENCE!

No, my rash Soul! spite of thy wrongs, thy pride!  
Think not, this human sacrifice to HONOUR  
Exculpated hereafter, so atone  
The crime of all, in my sad fate involv'd!—  
Think not, \* NORTHAMPTON—happy now in Death,  
To

\* The EARL of NORTHAMPTON died—some HISTORIANS say,  
of grief—very shortly after the murder of SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

To 'scape the living shame reserv'd for me!—  
 Think not, my Lord, my Husband!—No—His scorn  
 Denies to hope he ever will forgive!—  
 There—be the chance of Pardon as it may,  
 The WORLD's abhorrence, and my inward pangs—  
 Domestic anguish stares me in the face,  
 And daily renovates my misery!  
 O sure effect of guilt!—

*[Weeps, then starts.*

*But hark!—What noise!—*

Ha! 'tis my Husband! and so wrapp'd with GRIEF,  
 I must to her embracement yield him first,  
 Ere sue for his forgiveness!—Soft—He's here!

*[Retires back.*

*Enter SOMERSET, in Chains.*

SOMERSET.

Are these the trappings of a Monarch's love!  
 These rust-worn irons, ignominious bonds,

D d

Suit

Suit they a Royal Favorite, late ador'd,  
And flatter'd as a God!—If such the lot  
Of Favorites, high exalted but to fall,  
Diveſt me of theſe wreaths of Kingly grace,  
And give me back to my humility,  
My peace! my freedom!—O diſtracted wiſh!  
Who can enlarge the mind, by VICE inthrall'd!—  
By cruelty!—by murder!—What MONARCH,  
With Earth's extended empire in his graſp,  
Can free the ſoul, by conſcious guilt enſlav'd,  
And ſhackled to its fears— [Weeps.

*The COUNTESS comes forward.*

COUNTESS. [*Aſide.*

His pangs reach here—

Judge me, kind MERCY! does there want increaſe

To anguiſh, great as mine!—

[Weeps.

SOMERSET. [*Aſide.*

What voice of SORROW?—

Ha!



A TRAGEDY. 133

\* Ha! 'tis my Wife!—my bane!—

[\* Starts back from her.

COUNTESS.

[He sees me not ;

Or shuns the hated sight!—I must address him! *Afide.*]

O this way glance a look—Behold a wretch,  
The veriest wretch, that ANGUISH and DESPAIR  
Bent at the Throne of MERCY—

SOMERSET.

Avaunt, and leave me!

COUNTESS.

Too-stubborn heart!—Why burst not with thy pangs!—

SOMERSET.

Swift snatch me hence, where deafen'd Eccho ne'er  
Heard female lamentation!—'Twill distract me!—

COUNTESS.

Will you not turn, and own me in despair?

134 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

Or—left the vengeful arm arrest us strait—

Grant me a word, a look of consolation !

SOMERSET. [*Aside.*

Her tears, her beauty, stagger my resolve !

COUNTESS.

This cruelty, this hate, so well deserv'd,  
Wounds beyond death itself—I cannot bear it—  
Thus prostrate let me fall—Turn, hapless Wretch !  
Turn to the Caufer of your misery !—  
And with those chains—my crime's too just award—  
Destroy this hated life !—O look upon me !

[*Kneels, and catches his Robe.*

SOMERSET. [*Aside.*

She will be heard !—These struggles are in vain !

COUNTESS.

Or kill me, or forgive !

SOMERSET.

SOMERSET.

O I can hold no longer!—

She is my Wife—Can I deny her that,

I stand so much in need of—'Twill not be—

Self-charity forbids— [*Afide, in great emotion.*]*Raising her up.* Rise—rise! and thus,

In such embrace, as these vile chains afford,

Receive my full forgiveness!— [*Embracing her.*]

COUNTESS.

This grace awakes,

And aggravates my guilt! O had my soul

Less thirsted to revenge—

SOMERSET.

No more—no more!—

True penitence alone acquits the past,

Which to retrace were vain—And see—one enters!

*Enter*



136 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

*Enter an OFFICER\*.*

OFFICER.

Excuse, sad Pair ! the Servitor of State !—  
The Lords are met, and summon you to trial !

SOMERSET.

Have I not told you, I will not obey !  
The Royal word is pass'd—[O what avail  
The faith of friendship, promises of Kings !  
Yet why complain—I had no friendship in me—

*[Aside—weeps.]*

OFFICER.

I waited on my Liege with your reply ;  
He answer'd—that to save you from the trial,  
Might strain Prerogative too much ; but far  
As Mercy could, he'd snatch you from th' event—

He

\* This Officer was SIR THOMAS MORE, who was made Lieutenant of the Tower, on the detection of ELLIS.

He added ; much depended on yourself,  
And on your mild deportment—

COUNTESS.

Muse not, Lord !

Why shun this mortal sentence ? wherefore live,  
In agony of guilt ?—'Tis but to die  
Ten thousand deaths for one—to suffer hourly  
The complicated pangs of inward death,  
Of Conscience—of the Soul—

SOMERSET.

Thou hast inspir'd me—

[Yes—public sentence best atones my crime—*Afide.*]

I yield—Lead on—thou Partner in distress !

Hence go we forth, like the unhappy pair,

Exil'd from Paradise, yet strong in hope !

O may their penitence, their peace, be ours !

[*Exeunt—followed by the Officer.*

SCENE,

## SCENE, ESSEX, BEDFORD.

ESSEX.

Wifely, my Friend! have we declin'd the trial,  
 As Enemies confess'd to SOMERSET—  
 Our presence, as malicious, might abate  
 The full award of Justice—

BEDFORD.

— And beside—

AS FRANKLIN, WESTON, and SIR JERVIS ELLIS,  
 With that lewd Sorcerers, TURNER, were condemn'd  
 Upon most clear conviction—why suspect,  
 That Royal love so fallen, or party zeal,  
 Should step between the truth, and basely save him—

ESSEX.

WINWOOD alone, of his acknowledg'd foes,  
 Attends the Court, by virtue of his place!—  
 And see!—he comes to greet us with account—

*Enter*



*Enter WINWOOD.*

WINWOOD.

At length the bus'ness ends—Clear is their guilt:  
The EARL long pleaded 'gainst their right of tryal;  
At last the Court o'er-rul'd his stubborn pride:  
But on the sentence given, sudden he dropt  
His haughty crest, and violent in grief,  
Seem'd bord'ring on distraction—

ESSEX.

But the COUNTESS!

WINWOOD.

Sullen she sat through SOMERSET's arraignment—  
Which being done; with fault'ring voice and sad,  
She pleaded "Guilty", and confess'd the charge—

ESSEX,

Alas! the COUNTESS!—

E e

WINWOOD.

140 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

WINWOOD.

I rose betimes,  
And hasten'd thro' the croud—but soon, methinks,  
They both must pass this way—

ESSEX.

Tho' violent my wrongs,  
Yet, as my presence but degrades myself,  
Insulting their distress, I will avoid them—

BEDFORD.

We'll all recede, and mark them from a distance—

WINWOOD.

See, they approach!—How solemn!—View them well—  
The gloom of Sorrow, aw'd by female Pride,  
Low'rs sadly on her brow; while SOMERSET,  
In deepest agony of wounding Conscience,  
Now throws to HEAVEN his eyes, now folds across  
His slowly-bending arms, and seems himself

The

The Penitence he feels ; while wildness darts  
Fierce from his eye, and speaks his tortur'd soul !  
Back—they approach !

ESSEX.

My hate, thus sooth'd,  
By rigid JUSTICE melted to Compassion,  
Cannot behold her anguish and despair,  
Tho' purchas'd by her crimes !—Soft PITY pleads,  
And LOVE revolting bleeds for her distress !

*[Goes out ; the others retire back.]*

*Enter SOMERSET, The COUNTESS, OFFICER, Guards,  
and Attendants.*

SOMERSET. *[Apart.]*

What art thou, FAITH ! or whither art thou fled ?  
In breach of honour, and of Royal promise,  
Sentenc'd—condemn'd—Distraction !

COUNTESS.



142 THE EARL OF SOMERSET,

COUNTESS. [*Apart.*

Wretch that I am!  
Thrice wretched in his pangs—What not bestow  
For the dear means to footh—to comfort him!

SOMERSET.

Yes! be of comfort—I'm forgiveness all—  
And in this last embrace— [*Embracing her.*

COUNTESS.

O goodness! O my crime!  
Yet where's the Royal Love?

SOMERSET.

No more of that—  
Left I turn KING myself; and from example,  
Forfake and curse!—Prithee, no more of that!—

COUNTESS.

These sad reflections but enlarge distress—  
Forbear to think—

COUNTESS.

SOMERSET.

SOMERSET.

“O for a charm ’gainst thought!”

My titles—wealth—my interest with the KING,  
 To buy the antidote—See—\*JAMES consents not—  
 My influence there is lost—Perhaps your beauty  
 Can footh him to be kind!—Away—away!

[\*Wild.

COUNTESS.

What means my Lord?

SOMERSET.

You will not go—

Want you SIR THOMAS’ counsel—See—he comes!—

See, where his awful figure stands before us!

What TRUTH adorns his brow, and FRIENDSHIP’S wrongs

Sit pale upon his visage—They arraign me,

And their keen daggers pierce my very soul!—

My heart-strings crack beneath them—There—Oh!—

—[Sinks into the Attendant’s arms.

COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Madness were balm to what my sense endures!—  
 Come then—possess me!—Oh! it will not be!  
 On then!—to dungeons, chains, or death itself!—  
 They can't be half so dreadful, as these pangs!  
 [Weeps bitterly, supported.]

SOMERSET. [Recovering.]

What wretch recall'd my reason?—Take it back!  
 Let not a thought of Overbury enter—  
 I shall relapse again—So—so—so—  
 But see—he comes again—and Essex too—  
 [Starting, and mad.]  
 She drags me from him now—Off—SYREN, off!  
 Your charms have lost their virtue—Quick—Unhand me!  
 I have broke loose—My gladden'd soul revives—  
 It will dissolve in laughter—Ha, ha, ha!  
 And see! the much-lov'd shade—It waves me forward—  
 And whispers to me Penitence and Peace!—

Speak



Speak the blest found again—O voice of comfort!—  
Lead on, sweet HOPE!—I fly—I follow thee!

*[Runs out, followed by the Officer,  
and part of the Guards, &c.]*

COUNTESS. *[Recovering.]*

He's gone!—and where am I?—Too well, alas!  
This soul of Sense knows all its misery!  
Just HEAVEN, abhorrent of my greater crime,  
Denies allay of anguish, or relief  
Of momentary madness!—Yet—what hope—  
From greater suffering and affliction here—  
Of future pity on a Woman's weakness!—  
O how that sweet condolence charms my fate!  
Lead on then! I can smile upon the stroke,  
Fond of belief, there's Mercy in the blow!

*[Exit, followed by the rest of the  
Attendants, Guards, &c.]*

*BEDFORD and WINWOOD come forward.*

BEDFORD.

O rueful sight!—How Penitence allays  
The storm of hate—commands unwilling tears!

WINWOOD.

Yet see the dire event of injur'd Love,  
O'erweening PRIDE, and savage CRUELTY!

Hence to Mankind this moral truth be known;

“That vicious LOVE can ne'er support her throne!

“Nor human joys have permanence or force,

“Unless from VIRTUE they derive their source!”

T H E E N D.